

The Indian National Congress.

Vol. I

**BY
HEMENDRANATH DASGUPTA**

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Sahitya Samrat Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay
Prophet of Nationalism
and the Great Rishi of Bandematoram

TO
THE HALLOWED MEMORY OF
SAHITYA SAMRAT
BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAYA
THE PROPHET OF NATIONALISM
AND
THE GREAT RISHI OF 'BANDEMATAROM'
THIS FIRST VOLUME
OF
THE
INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
IS
DEDICATED WITH THE DEEPEST REGARDS
OF
AN HUMBLE
DEVOTEE
HEMENDRA NATH DASGUPTA

P R E F A C E

As the Indian National Congress is the only living and all-embracing Organisation of the freedom-loving people of India, I brought out a few months ago a Bengali version of the Congress for the use of my countrymen conversant with the Bengali language. Since the book has been well received and numerous requests for an English version have come to me from several quarters, I have been prompted to write the history of the Congress in English for the use of my countrymen hailing from all quarters.

To begin with, I have to offer an apology. As Calcutta was the Capital of the Central Government of India from the time of the Regulating Act of 1773, down to the year 1911, various events pulsating the country and forming the back-ground of the genesis of the Great Indian National Movement occurred in Bengal, which it has not been possible for me to ignore. I have at the same time tried my best to pay every leader of the country for his respects to contribution irrespective of any community or locality.

From my school-days I have taken an active interest in the Congress. After the Poona persecution of 1897, I prayed for and dreamt of Freedom. The Calcutta Session of 1901 interested me much. I attended the 'Swaraj' Congress of 1906 as a worker. I had also an intimate association with the Congress Session of 1917 and since then I have been in constant touch with the affairs of the Congress and though of late I have practically retired from active

politics, *Voice of The National Congress is to me next to the Voice of God.*

It has also been my proud privilege that as a Lieutenant and trusted follower of Desbandhu Chittaranjan Das, I had opportunities of coming in contact with all eminent leaders and politicians of the country from Mahatma Gandhi to the present Rastropati Acharya Kripalani. Besides other occasions, I was specially deputed to serve Mahatmaji while he was staying with Acharya Kripalani and the late lamented Mahadeo Desai at Desbandhu's house during the latter's absence at Darjiling in 1925 and was an attendant when he (Mahatmaji) was collecting money for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. The great Mahatma was also very kind to write a preface to my book "*Desbandhu Smriti*" which came out in 1926, and did not neglect even to look to my little Dispensary with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1925, which he termed as the "Swaraj Dispensary". Pandit Matilal was extremely kind to supply me with all reminiscences for the life of Deshbandhu who was his intimate friend and worthy associate. To Dr. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan and Moulana Mohommed Ali, I was introduced by Deshbandhu and as to the revered Moulana Abul Kalam Azad I had the fortune to stay with him at the Central Jail for a number of months in 1921-1922 and was charmed with his scholarly life, national outlook and political sagacity. Other leaders in the front rank I had also occasions to meet as members of the same Committee. I had also the fortune to come in close

quarters with Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mr. Satya Murti, Lala Duni Chand of Amballa, Mr. Rangaswami Ayenger, Messrs Kelkar Abhyankar, Anjy and others.

Nor was I less intimate with the old leaders—Sir Surendra Nath, Sri Ambica Charan Mazumdar, Sri Aswini Kumar Dutt, Srijuts Guruprasad Sen, Hirendra Nath Dutt, Bepin Chandra Paul, and also the brother-disciples of Swami Vivekananda. As such the accounts in the book besides research work may contain now and again facts gathered from personal experience as we would far proceed with it. Besides I have got ample help for this volume from other accounts hitherto published, specially the three books (1) Indian National Evolution by Ambica Charan Mazumder (2) How India Wrought Her Freedom by Annie Besant and (3) Memories of My life and Times by Bepin Chandra Pal. Other books & magazines consulted for this volume have also been mentioned thankfully in proper places.

In the preparation of the work I am grateful to my renowned pupil late Sri Sachchidananda Bhattacharya, the great business-magnate of Bengal, his son Babu Debendra Nath Bhattacharya and my friends Babus Amulya Bhusan Chatterjee & Sailendra Nath Sen.

Amulya Babu first brought my thoughts into practice for the accounts in Bengali and as for the English version I am particularly grateful to my friends Babu Promothanath Bhattacharjee and Babu

Sudhir Kumar Mittra, Secretary, Banga-Bhasa Sanskriti Sammilan. I have also been materially assisted by my three sons Monindra, Jatindra and Sunil. Last but not the least, I am indebted to my friend Babu Sailendranath Paul whose help and co-operation have gone a great way in quickly bringing out the book.

Before I submit the book for the perusal of my readers, who are the only judge as to its merits and utility, I must again bow my head in reverence to the great patriots of this Great Country of ours, whether dead or living, who have fought and suffered for the salvation of this land and our own people and some among whom are already our martyrs of Liberty—the glorious stars, shining constantly before us with the call to lead us to liberty and salvation and to them all I invoke, in the words of poet Swinburne—

“These O men, shall ye honour
 Liberty only and these,
 For thy sake and for all men’s and mine
 Brother, the crowns of them shine
 Lighting the way to her shrine
 That our eyes may be fastened upon her
 That our hands may encompass her knees.”

May the Almighty God help our National Cause.

BANDEMATAROM

124-5B, Russa Road,
 Calcutta.
The 6th December, 1946 }

HEMENDRANATH DASGUPTA

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Hemendra Nath Das Gupta
The Humble Writer of this Book

The Indian National Congress.



CHAPTER ONE

EARLY INFLUENCES OF NATIONALISM

The Indian National Congregation or in other words The Indian National Congress dates and comes to function in India from the year 1885 A.D. At first it was only an annual gathering. But gradually it attained maturity. The seedling has now turned into a mighty tree. The grand National Congress has now gained immense national strength. Who does not bow to its influence? One day its mighty strength will fulfil its object.

But has congress been able to acquire such invincible power within only a period of little over half a century? Has it been born on that day only?

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Have we actually seen it grow only within such a brief period so to speak ? It is far from so actually. The flower does not bloom only in a day. Who can analyse the indefatigable enterprise covering over centuries that lie behind it ? Our national history also has not begun only from that day. In the struggle between Devas and Asuras, the Hero-King Ram Chandra and Demon Ravana, in those between Kauravas and Pandavas as embodied in our Shastras and Epics, the foundation of Indian Nationalism is intrinsically and deeply ingrained. For many many centuries the noble impulse by which the Aryans of India were actuated to turn India into a holy place by the dint of their prowess, free thinking and culture, has been transmitted into the blood so to speak and has not only been able to enliven the people within its own fold and influence the character of their good-natured descendants, but has also been able to stretch a fraternal hand to others who came subsequently here viz., Shaks, Huns, Pathans and Moguls, and moulded the lives of these people as well. This century-old Sadhana (devotion) itself has not allowed the existence of India to be defunct, but this very Sadhana has increased her importance gradually and in future this very Sadhana will spread its influence all over the world.

In fact, culture and nationalism are the very breath of an Indian. Sense of self-respect is in his very

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vein, the feeling of independence is in his very artery. Not to go back to the ancient period of history, to the stories of Puru, Sasanka, Asoka and Vikramaditya, this national energy gave vent to, once, during the reign of Akbar. India was then in a very peculiar state. Akbar emerged as the Emperor of the whole of India, the Rajput heroes were satisfied, although brought under his subjugation, and were lulled into a disgraceful illusion created by the so-called sympathetic patronage of the Badshah. Indian civilisation, Indian Philosophy and Science, Indian epics and Indian cultural knowledge fascinated Akbar,—he realised their tradition. But the emperor became impatient of the glory of Rajputs and he was determined to crush it. Every one was caught in the snare, the Rajput forgot himself ; silly as he was, he sacrificed all his traditions and glory at the feet of the mighty Emperor by giving his daughters in marriage to the Turki. Every body had of course given up nationalism except only one who was ready to sacrifice his life but not self-respect and maintained his illuminating spirit of nationalism by his own heroism. The great hero, Rana Pratap Singh, stood alone against the whole might of the Mogul Empire and saved the national glory. He proved before the world "Self sacrifice is desirable to an Indian for the sake of freedom and self-respect". Everyone was charmed, at the noble spirit of his nationalism, even those who subju-

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gated to the Badshah praised him ; his brother Shakta giving up the side of his enemy came to him and asked for pardon, and even the Mogul poet-laureate Prithwiraj went on encouraging Pratap to protect his own glory. Thus Pratap went forward front to front, fighting fiercely with the Moguls, risking everything and winning battles. His efforts were crowned with success against innumerable odds, and he saved the Indian nationalism. With his indomitable strength and courage, Pratap alone saved the self-respect of India at that time.

Two other Bengali heroes, contemporaries of Rana Pratap Singha, did not also lag behind in vindicating national glory and prestige in their own domains. Pratapaditya of Bengal (Jessore) struck terror into the heart of the Mogul General by fighting and Kedar Roy of Vikrampur although not being shielded by the Arabali mountains was able to defeat Man Singha in the naval fights ; and sometime after that, Sitaram of Bhushna was determined to instal an ideal kingdom in Bengal by defeating the Fouzdar of the Perganas. A few years after, Rana Raj Singha of Mewar and Shivaji, the lion of Marhattas, wedged so deep into the root of the Mogul Empire from two sides that who is there to deny that Indian heroes have fallen behind under any circumstances in maintaining their own religion, saving their race or in liberating their own country ? That is why

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I was saying that even if evil days spread a dark blanket all over India and although she has been conquered again and again by foreigners, but never did her sons sacrifice their prestige, nationality or ambition for freedom and that they can never do. Nationalism is ingrained in the very blood of an Indian.

The other day we have noticed how treachery and dissension in Bengal, jealousy and malice in Maharashtra, treachery and disunion in Mysore—how all these dragged the Indian national life down to the lowest abyss. But even at that time Mohonlal and Mir Madan, the heroes of Bengal, Malhar Rao and Baji Rao of Maharastra, and the Musalman princes Sirajuddowlla and Tipu Sultan, were prepared to sacrifice themselves rather than give up their own independence and self-respect. Bhabani, Ahalya Bai and Lakshmi Bai, the ideal mothers of India also maintained the full dignity of womanhood and honour.

Then came the English and they occupied Bengal. The Nawab Mirzafar sat on the throne of Bengal by stigmatising himself with the Plassy affair. But the worthless Nawab did not mind how to rule the people. Just at this juncture Kasemali's fate turned and he became the Nawab of Bengal.

But national-minded as Mir Kashim was, circums-tanced as he was then, he felt the urge of nationalism and liberty in himself. The wide race-disparity

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observed by the officers of the East India Company and by the white merchants gave him a rude shock, his blood began to boil when he saw all the indigenous industries were dwindling away in competition with the foreign goods, and his quarrel with the English became inevitable. Nawab Mir Kashim was prepared to bring dire catastrophe unto himself for the sake of saving the prestige of Bengal.

I. RAJA RAM MOHON ROY

Five years after this, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born in Hooghly, and from this time on, the present National History of India begins. When Ram Mohan Roy first sowed this seed of nationalism, the whole of Bengal was in the hands of the English and during the administration of previous Governors-General—Warren Hastings, Lords Wellesley and Moyra, the whole of India had been just going to be under their clutches culturally, politically and economically. Fortunately, however, Lord William Bentick with instincts of a true Britisher came here as the Governor General. He recognised Ram Mohan Roy, appreciated and helped him and the seed grown by Ram Mohan turned into a plant with his help only.

Ram Mohan thought that his country-men would not think about themselves until they did learn

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English and so he arranged for the imparting of English education. By agitating in England he had also a Bill passed to the effect that Indians would get service irrespective of caste, creed or religion, and that was the Indian Charter Act of 1833. He always used to say, "Enemies to liberty and friends of despotisms have never been and never will be ultimately successful". That is why he was sorely disappointed at the disparagement of poor Naples before the terrible might of Austria, so much so that he did not condescend to see an Englishman named Buckland although the interview had been arranged by previous appointment. Again he was so much delighted at the passing of the Reforms Act, that he wrote to a friend of his, "I am always anxious to see the freedom of my race and also the freedom of the whole world. Had this Reform Bill not been passed, I would have severed all connections with the British". No man ere this was ever fraught with sense of liberty as Raja Ram Mohon Roy was. This freedom-lover Indian while bound for England, seeing a French ship on the way carrying the banner of freedom had it stopped, boarded on it and expressed joy by saying—"Glory, Glory, Glory to France, France".

Ram Mohan did not forego his national dress even while in London. He took with him his Brahmin cook and his old servant Hari Das and did not give up his national convention, even at the banquet on

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invitation from the French Emperor Louis Phillip. It is Ram Mohan who was the pioneer to draw the picture of "Independent India" of to-day. He wanted to see our land as an "Independent India, Friend of the United Kingdom & Ireland and Enlightener of Asia". Deshbandhu Das rightly remarked in one of his memorable speeches that "the life-work of this great man has got to be re-estimated, re-valued, re-understood and re-interpreted". Ram Mohan was really the first to sound the note of freedom in every department of life and in all forms of cultures.

Ram Mohan died in 1834 A.D. Iswar Gupta the poet of poets was then a youth of 23 years, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, a lad of fourteen, Madhusudan Datta, Harish Mukherjee, Bhudeb Mukherjee, Rajnarain Basu were then only boys of ten. Dinabandhu was then a child of five and the Superman Ramkrishna Paramhansa was born just two years after this. Bankim, Keshab and Hem Chandra too were born four years later. All of them helped more or less towards building up of this Nation.

II. BLACK ACTS & B. I. ASSOCIATION (1851)

Within fifteen years after the death of Ram Mohan, the masses were first awakened by a terrible agitation. The pitiable condition of the

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tenants reached its climax in every village and in every district of Bengal. The Supreme Court was established at Calcutta in accordance with the Regulating Act of 1773 . Gradually the Civil and Criminal Courts were established in the districts. The Englishmen, however, were not tried in Muffusil Criminal Courts and complaints against them were tried in the Supreme Court itself. As a result, the Muffusil people did not dare lodge complaints at Calcutta although there were sufficient grounds for doing so. Their purse, too, did not allow them to come at the Metropolis. At this time the European indigo planters mostly became terribly tyrannical Zeminders. Cruelty towards the tenants became intolerable and gradually it rose to the peak. The generous-minded Mr. Beaton (Law Member) determined to strike at the root of such oppression. He prepared drafts of 4 Acts in 1849 A. D. as follows :—

1. Draft of an Act abolishing exemption from the jurisdiction of the East India Company's Criminal Courts.
2. Draft of an Act declaring the privileges of Her Majesty's European subjects.
3. Draft of an Act for the protection of Judicial officers.
4. Draft of an Act for trial by jury in Company's Courts.

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Mr. Beaton found that it was not only necessary to undo the oppression against the cultivators and the tenants but it was also necessary to protect the judicial officers of the company. But his noble attempt was followed by an organised unity amongst the Englishmen at that time which was rather of an extraordinary nature. They termed this Bill as the Black Act. They insulted, sneered and abused Mr. Beaton, and to conduct this propaganda both in this country and in England they collected over Rs. 30,000/- by subscription. The whole country reverberated at this propaganda. Only the thundering voice of Babu Ram Gopal Ghosh was heard but due to terrible competition, he too, had gradually come to be silenced.

The people of India of course lost the battle but this insult pierced them into their hearts. They realised the result of the unity amongst the Englishmen and from now on they too were determined to increase their collected might. **The British Indian Association was the result of such organised and united effort.** It was started on 31st. October, 1851. Raja Radha Kanta Dev was its first President and Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore its Secretary.

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III. SEPOY MUTINY (1857)

The very next event after this was the famous Sepoy Mutiny. Its origin was in discontent. But it expanded on national footing. That is why the mutineers fixed the date of the battle of Plassy as the first day of their attack. There was then deep resentment in the minds of the Indians as a whole. Lord Dalhousie the Governor General pursued his annexation-policy on the absurd theory that Native States were being inefficiently ruled. The uneasiness of the Khalsas of the Punjab, stoppage of pension of Nana Sahib, prohibition on the widowed Rani of Jhansi to adopt a son followed by her emphatic utterance "I will not give up my Jhansi, Meri Jhansi nehi-de-engi,"* organising capacity of Tantia Topi and the heroism of Kumar Singh—all these served as fuel to that great fire. In that terrible revolution, which resulted in the spontaneous outburst of national sentiments, the Hindus and the Muslims were no doubt united, but everything turned into nought. The terrible flame was put out only by the tact of the kind, just and cool-tempered Lord Canning, popularly known as Clemency Canning, the then Governor General. He strenghtend the link

* Many contemporary Englishmen used to say : Rani Lakshmi Bai is the only 'man' amongst the Indian generals.

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between India and England and left behind, an example of uncommon talent, tact and toleration.

A world of difference exists, however, between the policies and ideals of 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, and those of the previous awakening of Bengal in 1851. In that rebellion of 1857 although at first unrest was perceived in Barrackpore, Berhampore and Ranee-gunge of Bengal, but the Bengali did not join it because of the religious ideal to some extent and also because of his ordinarily peaceful nature. That very Bengali who, urged by an impulse of indefatigable work, ceaseless struggle and sense of inner awakening under the able leadership of Desh-bandhu Chittaranjan proved afterwards to the world at large that "outbursts of violence amount to squandering of energy, time and organisational capacity" and also proved:—"by non-violent means independence may be gained but by violence we shall never get real Swaraj"—that Bengali exhibited this time too, very great prudence and reason for not sympathising at all with that rebellion and we have to be thankful more to our journalists, particularly to the pen of Harischandra Mukherjee.

The year after that i. e., in 1858, the Company's reign vanished and Queen Victoria herself took over the reins of Government on November 1, 1858, when a Durbar was held at Allahabad and the Queen's proclamation was read there.

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Lord Canning was the first Viceroy of India. Many hopeful words of promise were found in Queen's Proclamation. The Council Act was passed in 1861 and a year after the High Court was established in Calcutta.

IV. INDIGO-AGITATION OF 1860-61.

But even after this, chaos in the country was not removed. Although the Proclamation signed personally by the Queen and announced in every province, district, sub-division and village, that all her subjects should enjoy, the same rights and privileges irrespective of caste, creed and community, still so much oppression was perpetrated by the British merchants on the native subjects with such ruthlessness that the country-men began to think as follows :—

“Has the Queen taken over the administration of India only for annihilating the natives by letting loose upon them the Europeans as terrible and ferocious tigers ? Has God brought the British people from overseas to this place only for this ? Is this their duty to India ? Even while in Muslim regime, such events were rare”. *

Some indication of such oppression Bankim Chandra, the master litterateur, has given in the

Somprokash 21st Magh, 1269 B. S.

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character of Lawrence Foster † in his "Chandra-sekhar", a like of whom Bankim had the occasion to deal with at Khulna in the year 1861.

Virtually it is Bengal which became the main abode of various oppressions. Of these the oppression of British indigo planters was the most terrible at that time. The planters forced the cultivators to plant indigo. The cultivators had to take advances due to want of money, liability to pay rent and demand thereof from the Zemindars. But there was no end to the oppression of the Indigo planters. Generally the agreement with the tenants used to be for one year. Rarely it was for 2 or 3 years. At the time of accounting, the following came to the expenditure side :—

- (1) Advance money to ryot's name,
- (2) Value of stamp on the agreement deed.

(3) Price of seeds. And on the column for receipt used to come a few cart-loads of indigo-plants given by the ryots. Ordinarily the ryots did not get any dues. The dues of the indigo-planters on the contrary used to be brought forward first again in the next year's account. Thus not only did the ryots get no dues but the accruing balances each year were debited against

† The character of Foster is not imaginary. Bankim-chandra actually had to tackle such character while at Khulna.

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him. This very state of things has found expression in Dinabandhu Mitra's 'Niladarpan' :—

“Indigo advance and washerman's mark, once given, is never defunct”.

Let alone Dinabandhu, the period between 1860 to 1884 A. D. is taken to be the age of Literature in Bengal. In the first enterprise for political and national rising, the names of the three authors—Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Dinabandhu Mitra, Hem Chandra Banerjee deserve special mention, for whose gifts the mass-strength of Bengal took a definite growth. Madhu Sudan, Rangalal and Nabin Chandra too indirectly helped them. Besides this, Pravakar and Vaskar, Hindu Patriot and Someprokash, Bangadarshan and Arya Darshan, Bandhab and Bharati etc. monthlies and weeklies also specially helped. Had not the Bengali literature of that period helped the growth of public opinion, the political movement of the later period could not have been able to hold such great stamina. Actually, the way in which these authors and Editor's had built up this mass-strength, it has now with the help of proper sowing turned out to be a mighty tree. That is why I am laying emphasis on the fact that we are not less indebted to the master litterateurs of Bengal than to the political leaders for the national awakening which ultimately resulted in the formation of the Grand National Congress.

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Iswar Gupta was the Kabiguru and Chief of the litterateurs of the time. Dinabandhu, Rangalal, Bankim and Monomohan were all disciples of poet Ishwar Gupta. All of them learnt nationalism from this very Gupta poet more or less. The principal attributes of Ishwar Gupta's character were straight forwardness and patriotism. No sooner did he write :—

“See your country with feelings of fraternity,
And eyes full of love.
How we love our own dogs,
Discarding deties of other countries.”

than the spirit of nationalism began to flow in the minds of his disciples. Within a few days after, in 1859 A. D. poet Rangalal Banerjee inspired his countrymen by putting the following speech on Bhim Singh's mouth in his great epic “Padmini” :

“Who wants to live in disgraceful dependance,
Who likes to wear shackles of slavery,
It is hell to remain in slavery for ages,
A day's freedom is but a crown of joy.
His is worthy life and strength
Who liberates his country by sacrificing himself.

He has no equal who dies for the good of his country.

Dinabandhu Mitra the author of the invaluable book ‘Nildarpan’ of which we were talking a little

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while ago, was none else but one of the chief disciples of Ishwar Gupta. And this very book served mainly to stem the tide of the overwhelming oppression prevailing then. This indigo-planters' tyranny of the tenants requires a brief elucidation here.

Sir Frederik Halliday, Lt. Governor of Bengal was generally in favour of the indigo-planters. He used to think that their attempt to export indigo was praiseworthy. During his administration many indigo planters used to mix with Collector-Magistrates, visit clubs and also joined them in dinners and lunches.*

* Extracts from the Records of the Bengal Govt. No. 111, Page 782 :

"The police Darogahs" they say,—"**had instructions from the higher authorities and that unless the petitioners submitted to the planters, they will be turned out from their habitations**".

Page 792.—"**The Hakèems surrounded by the planters sit along with them while deciding cases, and the Court is crowded with Amlahs and the Mukhteers of the planter,**".

"**These oppressions are practised in the mofussil and the country is about to be ruined owing to the injustice done by the police Amlahs and the Magistrates**".

Page 805.—"**It is an established custom in the mofussil to allow a European a seat on the Bench, when he appears as a plaintiff, beside the judge**".

Page 813.—"**Sir, even the Darogahs and Deputy Magistrates are in favour of the Indigo Planters**".

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This is the reason why the tenants had the conviction that Government too was a share-holder in indigo. No doubt this idea was wrong, but this was firmly rooted due to favourable treatment meted out by Sir Frederik to the planters. In fact no body could dare to bring any complaint against the planters, and even if brought, it bore no fruit. The country began to writhe in pain due to illtreatment of the planters.

The degree of oppression gradually increased so much that finding no other way out, the tenants realised that the only remedy left was to depend upon their own strength. And this strength began to develop in an organised and non-violent way. There were some instances of violence in some places owing to the intolerable oppression being perpetrated, and it is also true that in some places even their factories also were set fire to, but these instances were rare, and where-ever they occurred, within a very short time the planters managed to set at naught the organisation of the tenants. But the organised movement started peacefully and unitedly by the agriculturists of Jessore, Nadia, Murshidabad and other places gathered so much strength and potency that even the Governor could not remain at rest and had therefore to move. Even Viceroy Canning was moved at the distress of the ryots. He became more perturbed and anxious at the organised unity of the ryots than he became even at Sepoy Mutiny. He said that a shot fired in anger

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or fear by any foolish planter might even cause greater harm. Thus he wrote :

"I assure you that for about a week it caused me more anxiety than I have had since the days in Delhi and from that day I felt that a shot fired in anger or fear by one foolish planter might put every factory in Lower Bengal in flames".

Fortunately, at this time, Sir John Peter Grant came as Lt. Governor of Bengal, from May, 1, 1859. With the advent of the rains in 1860 A.D. he was touring through the Bhagirathi and Jamuna rivers and the scenes he witnessed left so deep an impression in his mind that he was determined to root out the distress of the peasants in no time. The gravity of this movement can be well understood from a report of his—dated the 17th September, 1860—which he submitted after his tour in launch in some of the Bengal Districts. The report runs thus :

"I have myself just returned from an excursion to Serajgunj on the Jamuna river where I went by water for objects connected with the line of the Dacca Railway and wholly unconnected with indigo matter. I had intended to go up the Mathabhanga and down the Ganges but finding on arriving at the Kumar and Kaliganga which rivers run in Nadia and Jessore and through that part of the Pabna District which lies south of the Ganges. I saw numerous crowds of Ryots from various places whose whole prayer was for an order of Government that they should not culti-

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vate indigo . On my return a few days afterwards, along the same two rivers, from dawn to dusk as I steamed along these two rivers for some 60 or 70 miles, both banks were literally lined with crowds of villagers claiming justice in this matter. Even the women of the villages on the banks were collected in groups by themselves, the males who stood at and between the river side villages in little crowds must have collected from all the villages at a great distance from either side. I do not know that it ever fell to the lot of any Indian officer to steam for 14 hours through a continued double street of suppliants for justice. All were most respectful and orderly but all were plainly in earnestness. It would be folly to suppose that such a display on the part of tens of thousands of people—men, women and children—has no deep meaning. The organisation and capacity for combined and simultaneous action in the cause, which the remarkable demonstration over so large a country proved, are subjects worthy of much consideration”.

Sir John Grant astonished at the marvellous organisation, co-operative strength and peaceful and humble behaviour exhibited by the peasants, did not make a moment's delay in finding means of redress. Even before this he had already set up a commission with Mr. W. S. Karr, the eminent civilian as its president. This was known as “Indigo Commission”. The ryots were satisfied at the setting up of this commission while the planters became rueful to their bone. That is why to satisfy them Sir John enacted

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a new Act in 1860, which is known as Act XI of 1860. By this the magistrates were given larger powers. If any body obstructed a peasant to plant indigo, he was punished under this Act and there was no appeal against the decision passed under it. Magistrates were given summary powers also. The Act was thus popularly known as the "Cruel Law".

As to the Commission, people of all classes, including English Civilians, generous missionaries, indigo planters, Dewans, Zeminders, ryots, even men having no interest and journalists gave evidence before it and all the members of the Commission including Seton Karr, unanimously agreed that ryots derived no benefit from Indigo plantation.

Dinabandhu Mitra supplemented and enlivened with his personal experiences the tortures and oppressions narrated before the commission and he wrote a drama 'Nildarpan' out of these materials and his own personal experiences. Dinabandhu was then at Dacca in Government employment. This drama was played in more than one place not only at Dacca but also in other districts.

Wood, Rogue, Golak Basu, Nabin Madhab, Rebati, Padi Mayarani, Sairindhri etc, are the main characters in 'Nildarpan'. Under the operation of that 'Cruel Act' Golak Basu was imprisoned and Rebati asked "Is it a fact that there is no appeal against this conviction ? (pil hoyna)". Mr. Wood, the planter, and

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the hero of the book used to call the summary law as the elder brother of Shyamchand.*

There is also mention of the organisation amongst the ryots. One ryot is telling Nabin Madhab :—

“Sir, please look after my two sons, there is none to feed them. Last year I delivered 8 cartloads of indigo, but they did not pay me a single copper ; on the other hand have got me arrested for arrears. They are saying that they will take me to Andarabad-(prison).”

Taid—“Come on, you fool, you will have to pass via Dewanji. Your Burra Babu will also sail in the same boat with you.”

Ryot—“Come on, I do not fear, I would rather rot in jail than to plant indigo of the European planters.”

Thus were all the ryots firmly determined. A few other Englishmen like Seton Karr became the eye-sore to the then indigo planters. Mr. Hershel, Magistrate of Nadia was one of them. He was the grandson of the famous astronomer Sir William Hershel. It is this Magistrate who is Nabin Madhab's “Impartial Magistrate of Amarnagar”, son of a great man, and while out to Muffasil never had lunch or dinner with the “roughish planters.” There is also a remark

* A kind of whip consisting of a stick with leather attached at one end.

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regarding Sir John Grant, the Lt. Governor. Torab is saying—

“If God saves our present Governor, we shall be able to earn what we require, and these silly planters will no more be able to impose upon us.”

Due to the influence of this very drama ‘Nildarpan’, our countrymen became alive to the oppression perpetrated by the planters and a country-wide agitation was started against it. The memoirs by late Pandit Sibanath Sastri give a vivid picture of the condition prevailing then. Thus he describes :

“When men’s minds were so much agitated, at the disgraceful treatment of the planters, Dinabandhu Mitra’s famous drama Nildarpan was published. We shall never forget what great enthusiasm was aroused in the Bengalee society. We were all—oldmen, children and adults—become almost mad. The same subject was discussed in every house and lodging and the drama enacted in every neighbourhood. Just like earthquake the whole of Bengal convulsed from one end to the other. Due to this mighty upsurge of public feelings, the oppression of the indigo planters came to an end in Bengal for good.”

Amongst others, at that time, Harish Chandra Mukherjee of revered memory should deserve special mention here. He earned the blessings of the nation by inspiring constantly Sir John Peter Grant and

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Lord Canning, who too were very much moved at the sufferings of the ryots.

Harish Chandra was the editor of Hindu Patriot. His forceful pen could transmit life into the dead. The Sepoy Mutiny movement could not unbalance the brain of Harish Chandra, calm as he was. But it was Harish who practically led this just and all-embracing, peaceful non-violent movement of the indigo-tillers. Unceasingly writing in the papers, quarrelling with 'Englishman' and 'Harkara', advising the countrymen, the Viceroy and the Lt. Governor, Harish Chandra did not mind a bit in spending his own health, wealth and energy for the cause he held just. He even staked his life for setting up the "Indigo Commission" and for abolition of the Cruel Act, and his efforts became crowned with success in the long run.

On the 4th October, 1869 A. D. Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India abolished this Cruel Act (Act XI—Summary Procedure) and won unstinted praise of all.

Another generous Englishman, too, deserves special mention in this connection. He is Rev. James Long. Due to Mr. Seton Karr's initiative, the Nildarpan drama was translated into English. Michael Madhusudan Dutta translated it and Mr. Long published it by writing a preface to it. Mr. Seton Karr arranged to send 200 copies of this to England with

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Bengal Government-Stamp on them. At this, the dissatisfaction of the planters knew no bounds. They set up one Mr. Walter Brett, the editor of Englishman and got a defamation suit against Mr. Long* instituted by him.

In the preface to 'Nildarpan' it was written, "The two dailies are filling their pages with your praises. It does not matter what view others take, but you can never be glad because you are fully aware of the reason of their so doing. What attractive power has silver got ! The detestable Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ to the dreadful Pontius Pilate only for thirty pieces of silver ; it is no wonder that the two editors will throw the indigent and poor ryots to your mighty grasp being tempted to get one thousand pieces of silver".

Only for this in the trial, Mr. Long was sentenced to one month's imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000. Late Kaliprasanna Sinha at once brought that money and Mr. Long smilingly courted prison. At the time of departure he was heard to say "I am ready to go to prison thousand times for this kind of work."

In the Nildarpan drama Rogue unsuccessful in violating the chastity of Kshetramoni of impending

*For a description of the Trial see Author's Indian Stage Vol II (2nd Ed.) Page 95—100.

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childbirth kicked her in the abdomen. This fact had indeed happened actually. It was reported in the Hindu Patriot that a planter named Archibald Hills struck by the beauty and youth of a peasant woman named Haramani in the district of Nadia, forcibly took her while she was on her way to bring water, kept her confined in his factory and at midnight discharged her by a palanquin. When this was out in the paper, Hills complained against Harish Mukherjee. This Hills and Haramani are the Rogue and Kshetramoni of the drama of Nildarpan.

The tyranny of the planters did not cease in a day but Harish had an untimely end, meanwhile Mr. Long was also sentenced to imprisonment. Through disappointment people began to sing :—

“Alas ! how difficult to save the lives of ryots !
Harish died untimely,
Long had been clapped in prison,
The devil of a planter is now bringing total ruin
To this glorious land of Bengal.”

Happily, however, the indigo planters' oppression came to an end only due to the non-violent, organised and united efforts, and the heavy losses the indigo planters had to suffer, were without reckoning. Hundred years ago Mir Kashem had a quarrel with the British merchants over trade. Mir Kashim could not succeed and in that struggle

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he was ruined. Now due to the organised efforts of the poor cultivating ryots, the British merchants had to acknowledge defeat. Indians for the first time in the British administration came to realise the potency of organised effort. And at the root of all these was the Drama and Press of the day—the Editor Harishchandra Mukherjee on one side and on the other Nildarpan and the publisher of the translation—Rev. Long. Due to this combined influence, the public opinion of Bengal became also powerful. In fact, the subsequent success of the volunteer corps led by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan in 1921 and the Bengal Partition of 1905 bear ample testimony to the fact that in the presence of a justifiable cause, the strength of Bengal can work miracles. The power that collected amongst the public in the 'Denial Organisation' of 1860 gradually found expression in many ways amongst the intelligentsia too. The spirit of nationalism was also manifest in Literature and we shall describe that gradually.

It is true that Evil cometh from good and there was much acquired even from oppression of the planters. Deshbandhu Das in a later speech rightly assessed its value. Thus he said "Nationalism was in the making within which our self-consciousness was growing. If we do not understand the truth of events and incidents which have led up to this consciousness of Nationalism we will miss much

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[that is important to know. Throughout the ages, through every success, through every failure, through every battle which was won, through every battle which was lost, the history of India was working out her destiny and turning out The Great Indian Nation.”

It must also be remembered that the example set by Vidyasagar since the fifties was the most vivid in the minds of people too.

ISWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR.

Indeed nationalism even then was not extinct inspite of the cultural conquest by the west. The independent ways of the life of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar the father of Bengali Literature, and an example of ‘plain living and high thinking’ with slippers made at Taltola and a coarse scarf on the person, and his unbounded charity to the students and needy, spread the spirit of nationalism in the hearts of both the teachers and the pupils and young men in general.

MADHUSUDAN DUTTA

Madhusudan Dutta too cast a great influence. Although anglicised in his dress and dinner and although having married an English lady and mixed

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with the Christian community, he did not yet give up nationalism and a pure Indian heart. The words "National Theatre" are primarily his invention as his letter to Keshab Gangooly in 1860 would show. Besides Madhusudan created a great stir in our National Literature. First he liberated Hindu Drama from the shackles of the Sanskrit model and was the pioneer of the new School of Bengalee Drama that was rising up very soon in importance. In literature too he made an innovation and was the first to introduce blank verse in Bengali. Apart from the wealth of imagination it possessed and the stock of words Meghnadbadh contained, Madhusudan has demonstrated in this well-known epic how one should fulfil the vow of defending his own country from the enemy. The word 'Jati, or 'Nation' is, too, traced in this epic. Indrajeet (Meghnad) thus addresses to his uncle Bibhisan—

"O, you treader in the path of virtue, as the
World says, O, younger brother of the Rakshasas
Tell me, O uncle, your servant here,
On what dictum you give up your Kinship,
Your own brother and above all the Nation ?
Our scriptures, you follow, do distinguish
A foreigner of many qualities and a kin of
no worth
They prefer a worthless kin and welcome him still,

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As a foreigner is always a foreigner,
Who is never our own.

Bengal's Madhusudan was a pride to her sons and he is compared even to-day with no other poet than England's great Milton.

The nationalism of Madhusudan is contemporary with that of Dinabandhu and as his Bhim Singha and Meghnad are typical national characters, nationalism has pervaded all through even in his satire, "Is this called civilisation"—"Ekei ki bale Sabhyata?"

DEVENDRANATH

The then Adi Brahmo Samaj too had spread within itself culture and nationalism. Ram Mohan's idea of 'Free India' was vivid in the minds of the followers of his creation—the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Besides the members of the Tagore family were all torch-bearers of Nationalism and Maharshi Devendranath was the chief of them. At a time the Bengalees of the time were mostly influenced by glare of Englishmen, Devendranath used to keep himself miles apart from them. Even when Miss Mary Carpenter came to Calcutta to pay him a visit, he fled to the Kushtia Subdivision which was nearer to his zemindary. He used to think that he could not fall in with the British in their opinion regarding India. Mr. Lobb, the principal of Krishnagar College, wrote in a news-

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* *
paper "The proud old man does not condescend to accept the praise of Europeans". Babu Rajnarain Bose, used to say always "Devendra Babu would have been made a Maharaja, K. C. S. I. etc. if he had placated the English". It was Devendranath who founded the Tattwabodhini Patrika and it served as the mouthpiece of Adi Brahma Samaj. The famous poet and dramatist Jyotirindra Nath Tagore said, "The national feeling began to spread from the time Tattwabodhini came into being. Akshay Kumar Dutta inspired in the hearts of the people patriotic sentiments by writing in it stories and pieces about the glorious past of India."
*

V. HINDU MELA

Rajnarain Basu also gave the idea of Hindu confederation in his "Ekal-O-Shekal". It was Rajnarain Basu and his worthy friend Navagopal Mitra, both of the Adi Brahma Samaj who conceived the idea of "Hindu Mela" and Navagopal Babu translated it into a National Institution. It was first inaugurated in 1867 during the last part of Chaitra of the Bengali year (1273 B. S.) through Navogopal's efforts and the financial help of Ganendra Nath Tagore (nephew of Devendra Nath). Navagopal, the organiser was the editor of "The National Paper" and was also connected with other movements. Owing to his bias

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for the word 'National', he was known amongst the people of the time as 'National Navagopal'.

The Hindu Mela had a previous history also. There was a small committee at the Tagore family with Jyotirindra Nath Tagore as the Secretary and Rajnarain Babu as the President.

Rabindra Nath also used to come here now and again. It was the intention of this committee to manufacture indigenous products and they had a match factory in contemplation at the time. Rajnarain Babu had a very great enthusiasm for the work of this national meeting, but his forgetful nature betrayed a bit of impracticability which did not pass unnoticed from the eyes of our master artist Rabindra Nath. It appears to us that in the character of Chandra in "Chira Kumar Sabha" talking about indigenously produced matches, some idea of Rajnarain Babu's love for country has been given. But Rabindranath has given a vivid description of the old man's love and devotion for country in his "Memoirs" as follows :—"His irresistible love for his country was a matter of spiritual fervour with him. His eyes used to glow, his heart used to leap up in emotion and with a feeling of ecstasy he used to join us in the chorus and no matter whether his voice could tune in or not, used to sing—

"We have bound thousand minds into one,

We have dedicated our thousand lives for one work".

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This small committee in time developed into a powerful institution or the Hindu Mela with greater projects and as to how this development took place, we have from the pen of Rajnarain Babu the following :—"When I used to work for the committee for the promotion of national feeling in a narrow room with dim light, we never dreamt even that this great Chaitra Mela or Hindu Congregation would be the result of this. But the founder of this Congregation would surely admit out of a generous feeling that he was inspired and also amply helped by our prospectus of a society for the promotion of national feeling among the educated natives of Bengal and that in certain respects some items of that prospectus are also being literally translated into action in this Congregation."

It is this Hindu Congregation which first established the National Art Exhibition of Bengal. In this Congregation agriculture, picture, industry, architecture, the fine sewing and embroideries by women, native plays, fairs and gymnasiums etc, national subjects of all kinds were exhibited. Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal introduced physical culture as part of school training in Bengal. Nava Gopal taking advantage of that introduced some of our national exercises of wrestling, lathi, dagger and sword-play, having also in mind rifle practice. Our readers will please remember

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Then that selfish devil of difference is cutting
her grand body into pieces,
Seeing the misery of mother, can a dutiful son
remain at rest ?

Look, there the mother is crying overwhelmingly
How long can she suppress her emotions ?*

It was event that the chief aim of this Congregation was to unite the Hindu race and to teach them self-reliance. Some body indistinctly uttered the word "Freedom". Obviously the promoters of this Congregation were specially interested in establishing unity of the race.

Taking the cue from this Hindu Congregation, Monmohan Bose's national song inserted in his drama "Bangadheep Parajay", a drama which was subsequently staged at the Bengal theatre, was sung constantly—

"Poorest of the poor,
India has become dependent,
Weaver, blacksmith all piteously clarmour for
bread, night and day.
They can not find food nor ply their trade,
Threads and needles too come from distant lands,
No freedom even in utensils or matches,

* The above poem has been taken from the reports of the second sitting of the Congregation.

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Locusts come from high island on sea, (Tungadwip)
Grains are taken, but chaffs remain,
So the children of the soil starve always”.

Any way, the voice of patriotism and unity feebly rose at that time but its seed could not bear forth any plant owing to the currents and cross currents, outside. But this influence was specially prominent in Rabindranath. Thus he says in his Memoirs “To the superficial observer it would appear that many foreign customs were prevalent in our family but in every heart of the members of our family a sense of patriotic feeling was kindling steadily...Although that was not the time for patriotism, still the Congregation named as Hindu Mela created with the help of our family as the first of the attempts to regard India with reverence as one’s own motherland.”

VI. BANKIM CHANDRA’S INSPIRATION

The third and the best stage of nationalism is the writing of Bankim Chandra. Just like Sabyasachi (Arjun) he took his bow and arrow and implanted the seed of nationalism in the hearts of Bengalees and was later on successful in making it strong and effective. It is he who like Satyananda, the best of his characters thought much for his motherland, said while shedding tears: “I am crying alone for

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you mother ; weeping and wailing, my eyes have become dim." He invoked the mother in this way while shedding tears for the recovery of his motherland—

"Come Home, Oh dear Mother, we—your sixty million children shall worship your feet with hundred and twenty million folded palms, with sixty million mouths we shall propitiate you—Oh, our mother, that has given birth to us all, Oh you our nurse, our good earth and bestower of all gifts. How we should invoke you mother ? These sixty million heads we shall bow down on your feet—we shall sing glory of your name with our might with our sixty million voices,—we shall lay down these sixty million bodies for you ; if we can not, we shall shed tears with our hundred and twenty million eyes for you. Come home, Oh mother, what cares are there if one has got sixty million children ?"

It is Bankim who it appears, had an intuitive insight into the golden image as the symbol of his motherland, and that is why he cried hoarse to his countrymen ? Thus he invokes :

"One day I shall see the real image of my mother "Janmavhumi" with hands on all sides, equipped with various weapons, vanquishing the enemy, riding on an invincible lion on her right side, with Lakshmi the goddess of wealth and fortune on her left, with Saraswati goddess of learning science and culture,

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attended with mighty warrior Kartikeya and Ganesh, the ful- filler of all actions bestowing blessings.”—

It is Bankim who first attempted to unite the mass (public) with silken cords of love. It is he again who first of all was inclined to establish a connecting link amongst the high and the low, the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor. Thus he writes :—

“Now there is no sympathy between our high and low people. The educated upper classes do not sympathise with the distress of the uneducated lower class. The uneducated poor do not at all rejoice in the happiness of the learned and well-to-do people. This very want of fellow-feeling amongst all classes of people high and low is now the main obstacle towards the progress of the country. Due to this want, difference is gradually widening with the upper class. If the difference grows with the upper class, where is the contact? If the powerful men do not sympathise with the weak and the helpless, then who will rescue them? And if the entire mass is not raised, wherein lies then the improvement of the powerful too? This has not happened any where at any time that the lower class will remain in the same position for ever, whereas the higher class will be constantly improving. On the other hand history shows that in societies which have made special strides towards advancement, both sections of the people are equally competent, capable

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and are sympathetically disposed to each other. As long as this idea did not mature—as long as there was difference between the two, no improvement took place anywhere. Where there was harmony between the two sections, improvement began to show itself. Rome, Athens, England and America are cases in point. All are in the know of their history. Taking the other side of the picture, if there is difference among sections of people, the injury that is perpetrated to the society is quite manifest. Sparta, France, Egypt and India are instances in point. Athens and Sparta were two rival cities ; all were equal in Athens ; whereas in Sparta, one community was the master and the other slave. World civilisation had its growth from Athens. Athens is the mother of that learning by the influence of which modern Europe can boast so much. Sparta became extinct due to the civil war. The great revolution that began from 1789 A. D. in France, absolutely due to difference of treatment amongst various sections of people, is not yet over. Although its ultimate result was good, but that good emerged only after inconceivable social suffering. The good enacted in this revolution can be compared to the healing of a patient by chopping off of his limbs. Every one is acquainted with that terrible situation. Due to distinction between the missionaries and the public in Egypt, progress of society had an untimely end. In ancient India there

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were distinctions of caste. Due to this caste-distinction and the very grave differences that widened between the higher and lower castes a thing unknown in the whole of the civilised world, nowhere was such mischief done as has been done in India. It is no use recounting all those evils. Now the rigidity of this caste distinction has greatly relaxed. Unfortunately a great deal of distinction is maintained respecting learning and property."

Even coming of a Brahmin family the national minded Bankim was struck to the quick at this distinction. He tried to clear out this invidious distinction with the help of literature. That is why he dedicated himself in establishing equality by introducing chaste Bengali language. The country was more or less tending to become anglicised at the time. Conversations amongst the learned of that time were mostly in English. Letters used to be written in English, meetings used to be conducted in English. There was a tendency to imitate the English in every thing. So did Bankim remark sadly with a sarcasm :

"Seeing the condition as at present, it seems as if even the mantras for worshipping Durga will be recounted in English".

Bangadarshan, Baisak, 1279.

Indeed our manners and customs were so foolishly imitative that it was absolutely necessary to change

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the outlook of the then intelligentsia and the mission fell upon Bankim Chandra to reform it. Another fact was also clear that he did not think of the welfare in terms of Bengal alone. The whole of India was in his thought. He was also not silent over the unity of the Indians. We find one of the national ideals in the following words of his in the same first issue of Bangadarshan :

“There is no hope for India until and unless all the Indian races are of one policy, one counsel and one enterprise. This unity in policy, counsel and enterprise can only be acquired through the medium of English language ; for Sanskrit is now dead, the English language is the common ground for the Bengali, Maharashtra, Telangi and Punjabi. With this rope will be built the knot of Indian Union. Therefore let the English spread as far as it can. But it wont do to be an Englishman out-right. The Bengali can never be an Englishman.”

This very sense he conveyed in a letter to late Dr. Shambhu Mukherjee, Editor of Reis and Rayyat, too in the following words :

“There is to hope for India until the Bengali and the Punjabi understand and influence each other and can bring their joint influence to bring upon the Englishmen. This can be done only through the medium of English and I gladly welcome your projected periodical.”

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This unity in policy—Indian Union—Assemblage of Indians of all races—first came to light through Bankim's writings in the inauguration of Bangadarshan in 1872 A. D.

Bankim's early novels "Durgeshnandini", "Kapalkundala" and "Mrinalini" too captured the imagination of the people of the time and as to how he exercised a great influence over the youngmen of the time and for years after may be gathered from reminiscences of the famous nationalist thinker and orator Badu Bepin Chandra Pal. The latter :

"I had, if I remember aright, read Bankim Chandra's "Durgeshnandini" and "Mrinalini" and before I came to Calcutta. Durgeshnandini quickened my earliest patriotic sentiments. Our sympathies were all entirely with Birendra Singha and the court-scene where-in the Moslem invader of the former's State was stabbed through his heart by Bimala made a profound impression upon my youthful magination." *Memoirs of my Life and Times.* p. 227-28.

Indeed Bankim exercised a great influence in Nation-making and 'Bangadarshan' started in 1872 was the first and the most powerful organ of Nationalism. What Rousseau and Voltaire did for France bears no comparison to what Bankim did for Bengal, nay for the whole of the Indian Nation. He changed whole outlook and brought

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revolution in ideas, not through a temporary uprising.

Bankim, however, did not spread the lustre of his genius alone, but brought also a galaxy of litterateurs along with him—Hem Chandra, Nabin Chandra, Sanjib Chandra, Akshoy Chandra Sarkar, Tara Prosad Chatterjee, Ramdas Sen, Jagadishnath Roy, Chandra Nath Basu, with himself as the Central Planet. Hem and Nabin were the poets of the age and while the latter depicted the character of a Bengali hero like Mohanlal, the former gave the clarion call to young Bengal to give up slumber and awake, arise, and his “Bharat Sangit” used to be recited by young and old alike.

Indeed ‘Bharat Sangit’ of poet Hem Chandra Banerjee used to reverberate with thunderous voices.* The following used to be recited by majority of students, youths and teachers and even children :

“Blow through bugle—blow with this note
Every one is independent in this universe ;
All are wide awake to maintain the glory of
their prestige,
Only India sleeps on.

Arabia, Egypt, Persia and Turkey,
Tatar, Tibbet, what to speak of others ?

* ‘Bharat Sangit’ was published in the Education Gazette of 22nd July, 1870.

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China, Burma, Barbarous Japan,
Even they are free, they are mighty in their
own domains,
And feel it humiliating to serve others,
While India only sleeps on.

The land of two hundred millions.
This India is slave to the foreigner
Is lying there fettered with chains ;
Are the present people descendants of these
Who conquered Aryabarta !
Some are only sentries and guards,
And ill befit eyes to see.

From 1867 to 1864, Bankim exercised a great influence in Nation-making and as we proceed we shall make further reference about him in detail. But before I deal with that, a few other events need mention.

VII. WAHAVIS & REGULATION III OF 1818.

Although the Sepoy Mutiny was quelled through the efforts of the generous Lord Canning, the first Viceroy of India, the country was not still settling down to peace. The Hindus paid attention to the spread of education but some unrest still remained with some sects, and the Wahavis became a concern

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to the Government of Lord Mayo. The Wahavis were a religious sect with members from the Mohomedan community but Government suspected politics in it. One Amir Khan was the leader of the Wahavis, with head quarters at Patna. Those were the days when Mohomedans were suspects in the eyes of our British masters, and for declaring religious Jehad, Amir Khan the leader of the Wahavis was arrested at Calcutta under a writ and deported under Regulation III of 1818 during the Government of Lord Mayo in 1870. An application for a writ of Habeas Corpus was made before Mr. Justice Norman, Chief Justice, Calcutta High Court, but it was rejected. The case was argued on behalf of Amir Khan by Mr. Annesty, Bar-at-law, Bombay High Court who made a forceful argument about the personal rights of citizens of the empire. His speech about government's tyranny over helpless subjects of Her Majesty, published later in the form of pamphlets created a great sensation over people which was further aggravated by the murder of Mr. Justice Norman in the precincts of the High Court itself by a Wahavi Mohomedan. Further the refusal of the Government to grant him a Moslem burial aggravated the situation all the more. The murder of the viceroy Lord Mayo also at the Andamans by a prisoner Sher Ali soon after, caused no less sensation amongst the people. This man was also a Wahavi prisoner.

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THE NATIONAL STAGE.

We next come to discuss the influence of the Stage and we do that in an elaborate way.

Lord Mayo was succeeded by Lord Northbrooke who was otherwise a dutiful and independent Viceroy but unfortunately an unhappy event blackened his administration. Malhar Rao Gaekwar of Baroda was deposed on the allegation for having attempted to poison Col. R. Phayre, British Political Agent of Baroda, in whose opinion the administration was left in the hands of an inefficient chief. Previous to the deposition there was a Commission of enquiry consisting of three Europeans and three Indians. The Indian members considered the Gaekwar innocent and the others held him guilty. The result was that the deposition filled the whole Indian people with grief and a sense of unfair treatment to an Indian feudatory chief. Babu Amritlal Basu's "Harak Churna Natak" kept the treatment fresh and full in the minds of young India.

Next, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales (afterwards king Edward the VII) visited India in December, 1875. While he was in Calcutta,

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he was given an ovation in the house of Babu Jagadananda Mukherjee, of Bhowanipur, Vakil, High Court, Calcutta, and a member of the Legislative Council, Bengal. What raised a storm of protest throughout the length and breadth of the country in which press and poet also joined, was the fact that the prince was entertained by Mrs. Mukherjee and other friends of her with Baran and Ulu peculiar to the Hindu females, an incident which the Hindu Society felt an outrage to it. The "Hindu Patriot" voiced the popular expression in a pertinent way that the national feeling had been outraged at the price the Babu paid for his honour. This sensational feeling was further propagated by the Bengali Stage and the Government came to the rescue of Jagadananda Babu.

Lord Northbrooke did not however pull on well with the new Conservative Government under Prime Minister Disraeli, specially with respect to the Afgan question. He resigned in 1876 and was succeeded by a reactionary Viceroy in the person of Lord Lytton, who was the nominee and supporter of the imperialist Prime Minister. The above matters however formed topic of some dramatic pieces for the Stage and as hundreds used to come to see performance, our National Theatre of which the eminent Girish Chandra Ghose was the founder and Father, exercised a great influence over national awakening and in

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tracing the history of Nationalism the National Stage, also comes to the front.* To give a little history, the drama of Dinobandhu's "Sadhaber Ekadashi" was staged by people of the middle class evidently as a protest against theatre in aristocratic houses and this formed the germ of the public theatre in Bengal and "National Theatre" was named with the next performance of "Lilabati" and since then the theatre of Bengal had been guided and influenced by the great Girish Chandra Ghose alone.

Now in this theatre which was opened with the epoch-making drama of Nildarpan, the greatest sensation was produced through the small dramatic piece "Mother India" or "Bharatmata" which contributed a great deal to the awakening of the people.

The idea of 'Bharatmata' was that of Mr. Sisir Kumar Ghosh, the illustrious editor of the "Amritabazar Patrika" and was staged on February 19, 1873 at the Hindu Mela when Girish Ch. Ghosh led the theatre again, and the songs were borrowed from the writings of Sri Satyendra Nath Tagore and Jyotirindra Nath Tagore. As to how the piece acted upon the audience, we have from the pen of Natyacharya Amrita Lal Bose :

"During this time some consideration was being given to patriotic sentiments and to Freedom etc. In

*See Author's Indian Stage, Vol. II, Chapter XI.

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the Hindu Congregation of National Navagopal those topics were discussed in the addresses by Navagopal and Manmohan Bose. Then Hem Babu's Bharat Sangit had just made its appearance, then Satyendranath Tagore's song "The dry face of yours my Mother India" was just composed. At this time we staged a small drama named 'Bharat Mata' or Mother India. This play of 'Bharat Mata' began on a very auspicious Moment. The public appreciated the theme of the drama. There were a few set songs in Bharatmata and appreciation for them rose to such a climax that even if Bharatmata was not stated to be played for a particular day, we had to advertise in the end of the placard as Bharat Sangit at the end of the play.

Mahendra Babu used to play in the role of Bhratmata. He played the part so marvellously that we used to call him "Mother".

A whole scene of Bharatmata is given below for information of the reader :—

"Bharatmata is resting her left cheek on her left palm—her appearance grave, beauty of the face is unparalleled but sad. The hair is dishevelled and rough looking, is on tattered rags. Two iron bangles are in her two hands—as if he is merged deep in the ocean of thought. Some of her children are sleeping near-by. Their appearance is skinny and they had tattered and dirty clothes on their person.

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"The few children are sleeping by her side on the ground without proper bedding. All are skinny to the bone, their faces dry and bereft of lustre with tattered and slovenly clothes on. There is no body to rescue them."

"Just at this time the room was illumined with blood-red light, Bharat Lakshmi appeared and began to gaze at Bharatmata's face. Bharatmata had no change of expression, Lakshmi sang a song :

'Bharat,
Seeing your pale face
Your eyes shedding tears always,
The radiant face that used to emit lustre
of peace
Why I am seeing it thus ?
Seeing you plunged in the ocean of grief
I cannot restrain myself.'

On hearing the song, Bharatmata cast her eyes upon Lakshmi. But her gaze was vacant and without any twinkle, as if she has no sense. Lakshmi sang another song :

"Bharati, your children remain sleeping by
Losing all sense, strength and power, have
Become weak for want of food ;
My heart breaks seeing this miserable plight.

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"I cannot see such state of affairs any more. Quitting this place to-day I am going to the other side by crossing the vast ocean."

Bharatmata again raises her eyes. But this time too she is senseless. Lakshmi then disappeared and immediately the light faded away.

Within a short time Bharatmata groaned. It seemed to her as if the thief had stolen all her possessions. She tried much to rouse her children but no body responded—even if they awoke, they again fell to sleeping. Bharatmata began to weep :

"Alas ! Lakshmi has disappeared, she is now reigning as Queen Empress on the other side of the ocean—let us seek her help." All cried—"Victory to our Queen Empress." But Providence seemed to be against them.

"At this time one white man with face blood-red with fury like Jamadagni, began to kick her children by branding and admonishing them as rebels.

Seeing this, the hapless mother on her knees, said through sobs : Where is God ? When Lakshmi abandoned me why she did not sink in the innermost earth ?

Where is Harish, where is Girish ?

Where have you gone by leaving your mother ?

Bharatmata began to say crying : 'God, where are you ? Oh Providence ! such was in your mind !

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Oh my darlings, are you the same ? That was a day for me and now it is another. Where is Harish, where is Girish, where is Rammohan, where is Ramgopal ?” This portion used to be very touching.

In the end ‘Unity’ appeared and said :

“Brothers, disagreement, self-aggrandisement and jealousy amongst your own community are the root of all your misfortune. Until and unless such things die out, there is no possibility of any good coming to you. Now all of you take shelter under me and devote your all exclusively for ending the misery of mother :

“Why fear ; muster courage, here there is truth there is victory. All those separated from each other and weak will find strength in unity. Why you feel diffident to brighten your Mother’s face ?

At times about 1500 people used to assemble to witness this “Bharatmata” drama. And after the play was over, the audience were held over for nearly fifteen minutes. “Bharatmata” was played by the National Theatre also on the occasion of the celebration of Hindu Mela at Nainur, in 1874 A.D.

This is the first in spreading nationalism in the public stage and afterwards this idea expressed itself in many ways in different dramas.

The influence of the Tagore family is greatly to be perceived in this “Bharatmata”. Not only the songs were composed ; but Jyotirindranath Tagore’s

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“Puru Bikram”, Satyendranath’s “Miley-sab-Bharat-Santan-ak-mana-pran”, and Jyotirindranath’s famous poem on the occasion of second Hindu Congregation—all these have expressed themselves as if by uniting together in “Bharatmata”, Kiran Chandra Banerjee is said to be the published of this drama but many like Amrita Lal etc. have expressed that Sisir Kumar Ghosh’s (editor, Amrita Bazar) ideas are more or less incorporated in it.

After ‘Bharatmata’, several national dramas were played in the National Theatre. Amongst those “Puru-Bikram” of Jyotirindranath and “Bangar Sukhabasan” of Haralal Roy in 1874 A.D. “Sarat Sarajini” and “Surendra-Binodini” dramas of 1875 A.D. (both the dramas written by Upendranath Das) and “Hirak Churna Natak” too of Mr. Amritalal Basu deserve special mention. The last one represented the farcical trial and deposition of two Gawakwar of which we spoke in page 46.

In ‘Puru Bikram’ drama, the fearlessness with which Puru, the pride of India, fought against the Greek Emperor Secundur Shah on the banks of Jhelum has been beautifully delineated. Here too the song (Mili Sab Bharata Santan) has been quoted. Before this we have given some description of the song. The following ditties also form its part. The play stirred up deep emotions :—

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"Sing the glory of India

Where is the equal to the chaste, beautiful,
devoted women of India.

Sarmistra, virtuous Sita, Damayantee the devoted,
Incomparable Indian women,
Glory to India etc.

Great sages, Basistha, Goutama, Atri,
Biswamitra, Bhrgu
Poets, Valmiki, Vedavyas,
Bhababhuti, Kalidas, ornaments of India.

Glory to India etc.

This land is progenitor and mother of heroes,
Night brought in dependence.

Will that palpable darkness remain for ever ?

Will not the sun glisten again ?

Glory to India etc.

Don't you remember heroes like

Bhishma, Drona, Bhim, Arjun, Prithwiraj,

The meteor of the foreigner served to bridge
differences in India and punished the wrong-doer
while relieving the oppressed.

Glory to India etc.

Why then fear ?

Muster courage,

Victory lies wherein lies the truth,

Separated and of weak strength you will find

Strength in unity only,

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Why feel diffident to glorify Mother ?

Glory to India etc.

In the battle-field king Puru was exhorting his army against the Greek soldiers in the following encouraging speech :

“Rise up, awake my heroes, the terrible foreigners are intruding into your house. Be of one mind. liberate your mother-land, annihilate the enemy altogether. Delays can no longer be tolerated, unsheathing the sabre let us rush into the battle like kindling fire. Behold, the banner of victory is flying in the sky. Let the earth be flooded with the blood of foreigners. Let a river flow with their blood.

“Let the sky shower blood-rains of foreigners.

Let the fields of India be more fertile with this manure.

Such is the audacity of the foreigner, he wants to steal India's freedom easily ?

Have they thought that there is not a single man in this wide India ?

This land is the progenitor of heroes and is mother of so many heroes.

Those foolish foreigners do not know this.

Teach them a proper lesson, let them feel your might.

Let the earth shake with the prowess of Kshatriyas.

Let Kshatriyas sabre flash like lightning.

Let whole universe convulse with that sound.

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POETRY

1.

“Those foolish foreigners do not know our strength,
Teach them a proper lesson.
Let them feel your might,
Let the earth shake with the prowess of Kshatriyas,
Let Kshatriyas sabre flash like lighting,
Let whole universe convulse with that sound

Our forefathers who leaving this unhappy world,
Have gone to heaven are casting their eyes to you,
Lest the reputation of Kshatriyas is not tarnished
Fie on him hundred times who fears to die for the
sake of liberating his own country.

Let him not eternally in slavery,
What is the use of having life in lieu of freedom ?
Fie on him who holds such life.
Let life go if it has got to go, but let freedom live
Let glory of this country live for ever.

There is no more delay,
Unsheath your sabre.

Hark the voice of the foreigners,
Now my warriors. make firm determination,
Either death or annihilation of the enemy.
Either destruction of the enemy or taking shelter
in death

Achieve victory or embrace death”.

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In the "Sarojini" drama, too, of Jyotirindranath's, the heroines while entering into the fire for sacrificing themselves for the sake of their country were singing thus :—

Let the funeral pyre be twice aflame,
Widows will sacrifice their lives,
Let the fire of the funeral pyre flare up,
Our heart's miseries will end at once.

Look you foreigners, look the tortuous
Sensation that you have raised in our hearts.
God will bear witness.
You will have to feel the consequences."

Vijoy Singha, the hero in the drama of 'Sarojini', (Mr. Amrita Basu used to appear in this role) also expressed "When our motherland is asking us to work, that is sufficient. We are not to see to anything else. The voice of our motherland is our only oracle. The gods are no doubt our supreme Lords, but Oh, King ! it depends upon our own efforts to acquire fame. Therefore without looking to our destiny, let us go where our endeavours lead us to."

Upendranath Das was the director of that National Theatre and in both his dramas 'Sarat Sarojini' and 'Surendra Binodini', he inspired his audience with speeches savouring of nationalism. In some

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places, there were aspersions against 'Fort William' too. Sentiments in both the dramas and staging of those were not at all to the liking of Sir Richard Temple, the then Lt Governor. On one occasion the litterateurs of the Province were invited in Belvedere palace. Babu Hara Lall Roy, teacher of Hare School had written the drama "Banger Sukhabasan." But the Lt. Governor, as Rajnaraian Babu said in his autobiography, cut a nice joke with Haralal Babu for the expressions as "Freedom" and the like.

Besides the enthusiasm produced by these dramas, the incidents, at Jagadananda Babu's house formed the subject matter of a farce 'Gajadananda' which caricatured the prince and the host. Government issued an Ordinance suppressing the farce. A second farce of the name 'Hanuman Charitra' dealing with the same matter met also the same fate, and the third too 'Police of Pig and Sheep' caricaturing Sir Stuart Hogg and Mr. Lamb (Commissioner of Police and Deputy respectively), was similarly dealt with. Then followed arrests and prosecution of the leading men of the Stage for the performance of "Surendra Binodini". Although Messers Upendra Das and Amrita Basu, Director and Manager respectively of the National Theatre, convicted by the Presidency Magistrate got themselves acquitted in the High Court on appeal, the Dramatic Performance Act curtailing the liberty of performances was none the less passed

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shortly after in 1876 and the Stage was threatening suppression in effect.

On the other hand the Prince's visit no doubt enkindled our loyal feelings but the people could not forget their own helpless condition.

Thus our poet sang—

“How long after, will India swim across—the
sea of misery,

“Eternally plunging in cold inertia

Has she now gone to hell ?

Ah, you helots in your own house,

How gave your all to others—

Your riches, your jewels, your honour,

But adorn your breast only the iron shackles of
slavery,

There the lights of others kindle your cities and towns,

But you are in same pristine gloom as you were.*

* Govindalal Roy's (author of *Jamuna Lahari*) song—
'Katakala pare balo Bharatare Dukhasagara Satara parohabe'
—published in *Aryadarshan* 1283 B.S.

II THE PRESS

All the above incidents happened during the administration of Lord Northbrooke who was doubly unhappy. On the one hand he was not pulling on well with the DISRAELI Ministry of which the Secretary of State for India was Earl Salisbury, and on the other, the treatment accorded to a Gaikwar of Baroda, the Dramatic Performances Bill and the suppression of the Stage made a section of the people so irritated that it looked very surprising when in a Town Hall Meeting held in 1876 under the presidency of Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, to consider the creation of a Memorial for the Viceroy, Dr. Sambhu Nath Mukherjee along with nine other persons had the courage to move an amendment to it, which if passed would have amounted to a vote of no-confidence on the Viceroy himself. Of course the amendment was not allowed by the Chairman but it shows the spirit that was just peeping. The Aristocratic papers—Hindu Patriot, the Bengalee and even the Indian Mirror no doubt spoke against the steps, but the 'Amritabazar Patrika' rightly voiced the feelings of the middle class Intelligentsia in the following words :—

“There was the sure prospect of defeat and no prospect of reward, but yet in spite of all, amidst hisses of the many, they boldly fronted the Lieutenant Governor himself to press their views upon the

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public. We wish there were many such tens in our country. The political significance or the action of the ten can scarcely be over-rated."

Such spirit was then growing and the Bengali journals—Somprakas, Amritabazar Patrika and Sadharani helped its growth. Indeed the Vernacular Press was then acquiring a strength in the country and as to how it made the next Viceroy restless we shall speak later.

Now the British Indian Association which had done good and useful work was growing to be representing the landholding class and the aristocracy only and the need of an association for the growing middle-class intelligentsia was keenly felt. The first association was started* as the Indian League with Dr. Shambhoo Mukherjee as President, Babu Kali Mohan Das (uncle of Late Deshbandhu Das and Vakil, High Court) as Secretary and Babu Sisir Kumar Ghose, the reputed editor of Amritabazar Patrika as Asst. Secretary. It was very short-lived and although it did some work which may be called useful, it could not however satisfy the growing need of a powerful organisation for the middle classes. Besides, Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee was then the man of the moment who could voice the sentiments of the

* The inaugural meeting was held at the Bengal Theatre in October, 1875.

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new age. No doubt he had been dismissed from the heaven-born Civil Service for a lapse on his part which people rightly attributed to racial inequality, but as soon as he came to the field of politics, people flocked to his standard. He left service and was not even allowed to be enrolled as a member of the Bar but he took now the service of the country as his vocation and became its recognised leader. With the help of Babu Anandamohon Bose, another patriot and scholar, he now started the Indian Association* on July, 26, 1876, with the following objects :—

(1) A creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country.

(2) Unification of Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations.

(3) The promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Mohomedans.

(4) Inclusion of the masses in the great public movement of the day.

It must, notwithstanding, be admitted that Lord Northbrooke was after all not a perverse minded Viceroy but the administration of his successor marked

* Rev. Kali Charan Buerjee did not find any necessity of the Association when the Indian League was there. Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidysagar and Mr. Dwarkanath Mitra were for a Bengali Association. The great Bankim Chandra Chatterjee had sympathy with such an association as the Indian'.

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a reactionary policy which hastened the growth of Indian Nationalism all the more. Lord Lytton was a staunch follower of Disraeli and Salisbury and carried party-politics with a vengeance. Delhi Durbar on January, 1, 1877, introduction of free trade for imported goods to India, the Afgan War and matters of the like were all marked by the reactionary and imperialistic policy of the Disraeli Ministry.

The country was then visited by a devastating famine which spread from Madras to Behar, U. P. and the Punjab. Behar was then a part of Bengal and the famine there and measures taken to cope with it formed the subject of bitter criticism in papers specially Sadharani of Chinsurah of which the editor was Babu Akshoy Chandra Sarkar and guiding spirit was the great litterateur Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

Now Lord Lytton under the advice of Benjamin Disraeli convened a big Durbar at Delhi on January, 1, 1877 and proclaimed there the assumption of title of the 'Queen Express' by Her Majesty the Queen Victoria or the *Kaisiri hind*. On that occasion which marked lavish waste in money that could save thousands of the famished people, various titles of honour were showered and concessions promised. Sadharani gave immediately a retort in the article "Call the enemy back—we do not want your charity". 'Bhik nehi mangtehe ham, Ehi dusman ko balai le'.

In other articles, too, Sadharani showed how the

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Queen's proclamation was being distorted by Lord Lytton, how there had been no connection between politics and the performance of pledges and how while the Queen declared that all subjects were equally entitled to all offices of Government, Lord Lytton announced that all high executive duties were to be entrusted to Europeans only. The same paper Sadharani also dealing with the Fenna cases showed how the treatment to Europeans and "natives" was so very differential.

Besides, 'Someprakas' of Changripota which was absolutely outspoken in criticism of matters of public interest, Hindu Hitaishini of Dacca and Bharat Mihir of Mymensingh also spoke against similar abuses. Further, Lord Lytton was afraid of the growing effects of high education and called the universities "Educational hot-beds and forcing houses" and tried to deal a severe blow to the cause of higher education. The age-limit for the Indian Civil Service candidates was reduced to such a degree as 19, as became practically impossible even for a brilliant student of India to compete in the examination. Lord Lytton had at first even recommended total suspension. This was a breach of pledge of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858' as also of the Charter of 1833. Besides the illiberal Afghan policy as pursued by the Viceroy, wounded also the feelings of Young India. There was at that time a rivalry for leadership between

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England and Russia for the supremacy of power and England feared the extension of Russian power to the East. It is for this Britain helped the Ottoman in the Crimean War and its representative in India now tried to break the alliance with Amir Sherali and provoked the Second Afgan War. Indian intelligentsia viewed this aggression as an unjust interference with the freedom of a neighbouring country and what was more pitiable was that the famine fund was drained to meet the expenses of the war.

All the above incidents during Lord Lytton's administration raised vigorous protests both from the press and platform. The Vernacular Press specially of Bengal so much exasperated the Viceroy, frightened officials and caused nervousness in Parliament that the machinery of law to suppress it was set in motion in 1877-78 and the Vernacular Press Act was soon passed like Dramatic Performances Act. It was no doubt a preventive measure but the leading Bengalee journals took this so much as an encroachment on their liberty that they stopped publication the very day the obnoxious Act was passed. *Somprokas*, *Nava Bibhakar*, *Sadharani* and other papers refused to be gagged and stopped continuance, but the *Amritabazar Patrika* evaded the clutches of the Act by converting it to an English weekly over-night and making appearance from March, 21, 1878.

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The Indian Association called a public meeting in which all its branches and the whole intelligentsia co-operated, barring the British Indian Association aristocratic members of which were being demoralised by the glare of the administration. New consciousness was all the same awakening and Dr. K.M. Banerjee the President of the Indian Association regretted very much the refusal of the Sheriff to convene the meeting at the Town Hall.

The Press Act was followed by the Arms Act which tended to disarm the whole of the Indian subjects of Her Majesty the Queen Empress. It was understood by those loyal citizens of the Queen that her new title of the Queen would confer by degrees equal rights with other subjects of the empire, but it made further an invidious distinction between Indians and other people living in India. Both the Acts—the Arms Act the more, wounded the self-respect of the Indians and we agree with great orator Mr. Bepin Pal that “by these measures Lord Lytton instead of reconciling the new political consciousness in the country to British rule, helped to create and strengthen a new anti-British feeling among our people.”

In discussing the history of the origin of the Indian National Congress, it is necessary to give here some idea of the birth of a Pan Islamic movement which had been founded by Djemal ed Din who came from Afghanistan to India in 1881 and had confidential talks with leaders of the Mohomedan community in

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this country. He met Late Nawab Abdul Latif Khan and Mr. Justice Ameer Ali and got their support. The visit of Mr. Djemal ed Din in India tended to create a feud between Hindus and Mohomodans which is still existing and without passing any opinion I would only quote here a remark of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, than whom no truer friend of Islam had been found within my living experience. Thus he observed :—*

“Highly important is the participation of India in the great Asiatic Federation which is in the course of formation. I have hardly any doubt that the Pan-Islamic movement which was started on a somewhat narrow basis, has given way or is about to give way to the great Federation of all Asiatic people. It is the union of the oppressed Nationalities of Asia.”

* Deshbandhu's presidential speech of the Indian National Congress at Gaya, 1922.

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LORD RIPON & ILBERT BILL

For all the above measures, Lord Lytton's administration, the most reactionary Governor General since the days of Lord Dalhousie, created great unrest everywhere and if there was no sign of the violent scenes of Delhi or elsewhere of the mutinous days of 1857, the intelligentsia was greatly perturbed, and to the immense relief of the people, the Conservative Disraeli Party of England got a defeat at the general election of 1880 at the hands of Mr. Gladstone and his party who had bitterly criticised Lytton's Indian policy and made for the first time the Indian question as an issue for the electioneering campaign. The fight was being keenly watched by the people of India and the success of the liberal party with Mr. Gladstone as the chief, in April 1880 aroused much hope and enthusiasm and for the next half a century at least, the Liberal party had India for its moral support till the days of the Bengal Partition. With the change of ministry Lord Lytton left the shores of India.

Mr. Gladstone sent then Lord Ripon as the Viceroy of India who was known more as a religious man. Ripon loved India and began to give practical proof

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of the change of policy he came really to initiate. Lord Ripon repealed immediately the Vernacular Press Act, which evoked considerable feeling of enthusiasm amongst the people, especially the middle class including students. He put an end to the devastating war at the front and gave the people the first instalment of Self-Government in the municipalities and District Boards and with that object inaugurated the Local self-Government Act. He was the first Viceroy who strictly adhering to the pledges of Her Majesty the Queen began to demonstrate an equality in all classes of subjects and had to that end the courage to ask the Law member to put the Ilbert Bill to the Legislative Council to give practical evidence of the Queen's pledges. This raised an agitation amongst the Europeans, the like of which had never been witnessed on the soil of India, and we should not deny our readers the whole development and its repercussion on the Nationalism of India. Indeed the movement found great expression amongst the intelligentsia. The origin of it was in the invidious distinction between the Whites and the so-called 'black' people which culminated in that most sensational Ilbert Bill.

We should take our readers to the facts that formed the back ground. The late Surendra Nath Banerjee, Rames Chandra Dutta and Beharilal Gupta passed the Civil Service Examination in the same

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year from England and were appointed to the posts as Assistant Magistrates in different districts. As I said before, Surendra Nath's services were dispensed with due to trifling latches. At one time he was more European than even a European. He did not even allow arguments in Bengali in his court, in the criminal cases, but he was disillusioned before long. His dismissal was attributed more to that distinction. He wanted to be treated as other European civilians were and that created the trouble. Whatever that was, people took his dismissal as a national insult. But he was not the man to take things lying down and became the people's leader in no time.

I. THE ILBERT BILL

The Ilbert Bill agitation began in the beginning of the year 1882, the same year the Criminal Procedure Code appeared in an amended form and powers of Presidency Magistrates were enlarged. The Bill originated in the following way :

Mr. Behari Lal Gupta was a Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta and as such, a Justice of the Peace. He had thus jurisdiction over and could try European British subjects, while Mr. Rames Dutta although a District Magistrate (then posted at Bankura) had not, but a subordinate Magistrate, a joint or an Assistant Magistrate, against whose orders appeal lay before Mr. Dutta, could have that jurisdiction if

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he was a European. The distinction was invidious and unseemly and Rames Chandra drew the attention of Mr. Gupta to this anomaly. Mr. Gupta saw Sir Ashley Eden, the then Lieutenant Governor, and represented every thing to him. Sir Ashley convinced of the justness of the cause asked Mr. Gupta to write a Minute and submit that to him. After a well-reasoned note was given by Mr. Gupta, Sir Ashley forwarded it to the Viceroy Lord Ripon with his own observations. The Viceroy too was convinced and asked the Law Member Sir Courtney Ilbert to prepare a Bill which he presented to him. This was the famous Ilbert Bill.

The Bill created a great sensation and the European Community resolved to protest it with all might and resources at their command. 'What to be tried by the nasty natives, the niggers of the soil' ! was the cry raised in all quarters in which Eurasians, Armenians, Jews and even native Christians with a suit or pant and with an English name, too, joined. Grim determination was noticed to carry out the agitation and for this purpose, funds were raised. A defence association was set up before long with representatives.

The Bill was put on the legislative anvil on February, 9th, 1883. Time was granted for discussion amongst the communities concerned. Meetings were held in all places and the above people in

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combination began to agitate by writing pamphlets and disseminating exciting speeches. On the 28th February 1883, the opponents of the Bill called a stormy meeting at the Town Hall in which much communal venom was emitted in reference to the natives. Those amongst others who waxed eloquence were Messers J. J. Keswick, G. H. A. Branson and A. B. Miller. Not only, 'the natives'—but their judges and magistrates too were the target of attack and what is more, even the Viceroy Lord Ripon was not spared and became the butt end of many redicules, jeerings and scorn. Those who were present at the meeting could never forget the tearing and raging scenes when the venomous invectives were showered on the natives and "The Englishman" and "Hurkara" began to add fuels to the communal fire. The Pioneer no doubt praised on a later occasion these sentiments as the outcome of the tiger-qualities of the British Lion, but to an impartial mind any kind of sedition which has been responsible for sending hundreds of our countrymen to Jail would have been utterly insignificant in comparison with the vilification hurled by their British fellow subjects in India against the Government of Lord Ripon and particularly against the person of Lord Ripon himself. It was Barrister Branson who surpassed every body in hurling malicious insinuations and ridicule in this meeting, and earned such notoriety for his mischievous propaganda that

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his opposition to this Bill was termed as *Bransonism*. Bankim Chandra has in a masterly way described this subject in the story of a native Christian (a Band-master) and a fisherwoman and we draw the attention of the readers to this picture. Bankim Chandra has painted the characters and with a rich humour living gusto in which the paper "Englishman" would discover relationship between Jaladhar Deputy and the fisherwoman Jalaini and how it had described the native Christian, Dickson by name, as an European British subject whose only word to the Magistrate was "Tomar justification nehin."

Be that as it may, a number of resolutions was passed in that Town Hall meeting. The first resolution ran as—"The Bill is unnecessary, uncalled for and founded on no experience and whilst forfeiting a much valued and prized and time-honoured privilege of European British Subjects it confers no benefit upon natives, while imperilling the liberties of European British subjects, it in no way affords any additional protection to natives ; it will deter investment of British capital in the country by giving rise to a feeling of insecurity as to liberties and safety of European British subjects employed in the mufussil and also of their wives and daughters and it has already stirred on both sides a feeling of race-antagonism and jealousy such as never has been aroused since the Mutiny of 1857."

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This proposal was moved by Mr. J. J. Keswick seconded by Mr. J.H. Branson and was supported by Mr. W. Blick.

The protest of the Armenians and the Anglo Indians and the consequential hurling of invectives at the natives coupled with the support of papers like *Englishman* elicited much vociferation from the poets* of the day. Many poems and ballads were composed with the movement as the back ground. The National poet, Hemchahdra, wrote :

“Kingdom gone, prestige gone,
Cries the ‘Englishman’,
Cries Branson, Kesayak, Miller,
What to appear before a native ! never, never,
That’s humiliation, loss of prestige, my darling.
Never shall that happen,
Natives to pry into secrecy of our women folk ?
Never my darling shall that be,
It can never be so long we live.”

As protest to the white Barristers the famous orator Lalmohon Ghosh addressed a meeting in the Northbrooke Hall at Dacca with such impressive oration that the whole of Bengal began to quake from one end to the other and condemned Branson and

* Our poets shall sing of his infamy until his name shall become a bye-word and a hissing reproach to after-ages and to generation yet born.—Lalmohon’s speech in England.

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others for the unholy movement launched by them. The Vakils of the High Court too convening a meeting protested strongly and stopped giving briefs to Branson and others of his class. The 'native' Attorneys also called a meeting and approved of and co-operated in the resolution of the Vakils and also promised not to engage Mr. Branson in any case. As a result, the famous Barrister Branson whose briefs had no number, turned out to be a briefless one. Branson of course apologised for his strong invectives but the 'natives' did not forgive him, as Branson did not admit in the least that his opinion was wrong. The last condition of Branson is described in '*Somprokash*' (The 7th May, 1883) in the following words :

"Not only to readers of Somprokash but it needs no introduction to the readers of other papers too to tell them who is this Branson. He is devoid of conscience and the idea of right and wrong, and is a sturdy opponent of the Ilbert Bill. It is he who espoused the unholy cause of those Englishmen who were maliciously opposed to the Ilbert Bill. For that offence of his, he is being denounced by the Indians and the poor fellow crying for bread is now sailing in ships bound for the other side.

"Alas, it grieves our hearts when we think of the last days of Branson. One who manifested extraordinary forensic lore in his arguments in before the High Court for so long, had such fate in the end !

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That Branson whom money used to pursue like anything, whom men used to propitiate by giving him innumerable briefs, did not get a single one now ! Of course he apologised with folded palms, but the wheel of his destiny did not turn. Finding no other alternative he had to set sail for England”.

(Somproksh 25th Baisakh 1290 B. S.)

Although Branson met with such a fate due to the organised and united determination of the Indians, but the movement by the whites did not end or stop. The following observatives were made by Sir Rivers Thompson, the next Lt. Governor :

“If it be the opinion of the Government of India that this is a case of temporary excitement which will soon die out, I am sure they are mistaken, for I feel, in the whole of my experience in India, this is unmistakably the strongest and the most united.”

Actually some of the whites did not shudder even to use force upon Lord Ripon. As soon as he returned to Calcutta in the winter of 1883-84, in the gates of the Government House, a set of men behaved with Lord Ripon most insultingly. Mr. Buckland says as follows, in his “Bengal under Lientenant Governors”.

“A conspiracy had been formed by a number of men in Calcutta who had bound themselves in the event of Government adhering to their projected legislation to over-power the sentries at Government House, put the Viceroy on board a steamer at

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Chandpal Ghat and send him to England via Cape Comorin. The existence of the conspiracy was known to the Lt. Governor and the responsible officers who subsequently gave the information."

Ultimately Lord Ripon had to give in and the Bill was dropped.

Some Readers may enquire as to necessity of these details in the narration of the history of the Congress. This question would be very reasonable and I have to give them the reasons.

The history of the Congress becomes incomplete if no mention is made in it of the contributions of the early friends of Indian Nationalism and in truth the people of Bengal were the most prominent at the time and their ideas have been followed by other Nationalists of India too. The far sighted Mr. Gokhale truly harped, "what Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow". Indeed it is the Bengalee who was the first in the field to proceed to establish himself by dint of his own suffering and during the reign of Lord Ripon there were ample data upon which to establish oneself. If the Bengali literature did not keep the ground fertile, the mass strength could never become so powerful. If the mass strength was not powerful the Congress could not out turn into a such mighty national organisation within half a century from an annual conference of a few high intelligentsia. So if no mention is made of the contributions of

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literature at that time and the whole range of events is not described delineating the growth and development of the mass strength—the History of the Congress will remain incomplete. That is why it is absolutely necessary to depict those events as are clearly manifest in the national literature of the day. It is for this that I am obliged to describe all essential events and the position of the National Literature before December, 1885 when the Indian National Congress first assembled at Bombay.

But why was so much feeling of resentment stemmed up all on a sudden against the Illbert Bill ? Why so much invective was poured against the natives ? Eden, Ripon and Ilbert churned the sea with the object of getting gems no doubt but why did gall come up. The answer is easy and simple. It was Lord Ripon who demonstrated his liberal policy by appointing Sir Ramesh Chandra Mitter as the acting Chief Justice of the High Court (in a temporary capacity in the absence of Sir Richard Garth) and Mr. Woomesh Chandra Banerjee as Standing Counsel that set the ball rolling. That the agitation was due to this will be clear from the following remarks of the famous John Bright who said :

These two appointment and the suspicion that more may follow, have disturbed the minds of the members of the Calcutta Bar, and built up all this jealousy"—Speech at Wills' Rooms on Aug. 1, 1883).

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In fact the Europeans used to think that "India is won by us, we have acquired it by sword and we shall keep it by swords ; what right have the natives got for India ? They are nothing else but helots in the soil ?" During the Ilbert Bill agitation the Lt. Governor Sir Rivers Thompson, Mr. Justice Stephen and other civilians instead discouraging the race disability and inequality rather fomented it. Following their example other Asians too with white skin, including the Armenians and the Jews became greatly opposed to the Ilbert Bill. The object of removing the race disability imposed upon native Magistrates and Judges by Chapter 33 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, was thus nipped in the bud. The famous orator Lalmohan Ghose stood as the arch enemy of Branson not only in Bengal but he even went to England and continued agitation addressing meetings in many places and was thus able to bring many broad-minded Englishmen to his side. Many enlightened and impartial Liberals like John Bright, Charles Bradlaw etc., advised the Englishmen of this country to establish friendly relationship with the Indian people by specially warning them against such wrong step. A portion of Mr. Bradlaw's speech at the Parliament on 31st December, 1883, when he strongly advocated conferment of equal rights and privileges on the Indians, is given below :

"I am of opinion that we have obtained our

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authority in India in a great part by means of which we ought to be heartily ashamed. And I think if we continue to govern India, there is the weightiest duty upon every Englishman and English woman to take care that the despotic authority of England should be used, so much as it can be, to redeem our past and to make our Indian fellow-citizens desirous of being governed by us (Hear, hear). Conservative speakers seem to hold a different view. They hold the view that was put forward by Lord Ellenborough in the House of Lords many years ago. He said "Our very existence depended upon the exclusion of the native from the military and political power. We have won the empire by the sword and we preserve it by the same means" (Shame). I say that is a shameful doctrine (Hear, hear) I say that is a doctrine which no Englishman, to whatever party he may belong, ought to propose."*

The famous old John Bright who had stood against the infamous Corn Law showed equally characteristic toleration and generosity in the following remarks of his, about India. Thus he said :—

"But I should say that one thing is perfectly certain that India was not committed to our control to be held as a field for English greed. Our fathers may have erred—in my opinion they did greatly err—

* vide Hindu Patriot, January, 9, 1884.

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but their children will make some compensation to the countless millions now subject to their rule by a policy of generosity and justice—a policy, which in my opinion, India and the world have a right to expect and to demand from the Christian people as we profess to be.”

“India was not” he again repeated, “committed to our control to be held as a field for English ambition and English greed”.

Bradlaw was a liberal minded member of the Parliament who had the welfare of India to his heart. He opined that if the narrow-minded whites can not make Indians as men like their own, it was better they should not go there at all. His opinion on the Ilbert Bill also deserves special mention. Thus he said—

“I hold here a Government report—not a report of a party character but a report made under the authority of Government, both Conservative and Liberal, and I find that since the railways have commenced, mean whites or European vagrants have begun to spread over the country and are increasing in numbers so that efforts have been made to grapple with this evil. This report has not been made for the Ilbert Bill, for it was printed nine years before the Ilbert Bill was proposed. The gaols and work-houses have found in them too many of these European vagrants. But none of these

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have been subject to criminal law, because there was no European Judge and in order to get them tried, you had to send them to Madras, Calcutta or Bombay. Often you could not transport the witnesses so far; therefore, there was a failure and a miscarriage of justice. The Ilbert Bill is to remedy this, to give the same jurisdiction outside the Presidency cities as exists..... Now Mr. Justice Stephen claims that the Ilbert Bill ought not to be accepted because it is the privilege of the European not to be tried by a Hindu. I deny the privilege. If an Englishman puts himself in contact with the Hindu, knowingly beforehand, he is bound to submit himself to the law and he has no right to privilege which prevents his crime from punishment (cheers).

"The people who have no sympathy with the natives amongst whom they go, should not go there (Hear, hear). They should not go amongst them if they intend to regard them as an alien race. And if they go, they have no right to ask us to protect them with the sword, because they do not choose to be sympathetic with the natives to whom it is their profit to go."

But although the mass strength grew immense in India, due to agitation raised by noble minded persons like Lal Mohan, Bright, Bradlaw, Bryce in England, efforts turned into smoke in effect. The matter was debated on the 4th and 7th January, 1884, in the Indian

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Legislative Assembly and it was duly enacted as Act III of 1884. It was settled :

(1) There should be no difference between the European and native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges and they should be designated as Justice of the Peace. (J. P.).

(2) But the European British subject would get the benefit of a trial by jury on his mere asking for it against any complaint. The majority of the jury should comprise men of his own class.

In fact nothing came out of it. The privileges of European British subjects remained the same as before.

The natives had no privilege to a trial by jury but it was different with the English. Moreover, the European jurors of the District returning a verdict of not guilty in most cases, the accused were set at liberty. On many an occasion the requisite number of jurors were rare to be found in mufussil. As a result, trial took place in another district or in Calcutta at which the party seeking for justice was put to unnecessary expenditure and hardships and owing to his inability to produce witnesses in trial the accused were set at liberty very often. Therefore, the result of the Ilbert Bill did not bring any good to the Indians. Of course the powers of District Magistrates were enhanced in so far as awarding of punishment was concerned. Under Section 446 of

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the Cr. P. C. the District Magistrate could award a British accused three months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000/- or 6 months' imprisonment in lieu, or a fine of Rs. 2000/. This is nothing because the trial was seldom done by any native magistrate because in districts where the posts of District Magistrates were offered to natives, invariably European Assistant Magistrates were also posted there. And the District Magistrates in order to avoid trouble and botheration used to send such cases to their subordinate white Civilian Assistant Magistrates. Therefore the powers of the European Magistrate remained as before and the matter rested where it was. The Indigo and Tea planters heaved a sigh of relief.

The renowned poet Hemchandra seeing the fate of this ill-fated Ilbert Bill gave a bit of his mind in his poem "*Mantrer Sadhan* :"

"India shall learn—shall learn this,
It will never be otherwise for ever,
On one side the anguish of millions
A few whites their opponents,
Still the few could tread a million.

The Viceroy and the ministers
Kept their national honour and prestige in tact,
"Learn you, Sons of India,

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You who are just like a leaf of grass
before the white
All eulogies to the king are meaningless.

The efficiency with which they realise
their ideal,

That noble ideal—that *unity*,
Resolve to give up your life,
Otherwise remain where you are.”

Actually Lalmohan also made it clear about this in a London meeting :—

“Well, gentlemen, it comes to this. While a native of India may be sentenced to capital punishment without intervention of a jury, the same magistrate may not of himself impose a shilling as fine on a drunken Englishman who may claim to be tried by a jury, no matter how trivial the offence may be with which he is charged, with being drunk or disorderly in the streets.”

Hem Chandra did not spare even Lord Ripon. He wrote the following poem :—

“Hear you, Ripon the Viceroy of India,
Do not indulge any more in this mockery.
Promising nectar you gave poison,
Made common cause with your own community
Enlarged their power hundred-fold,
Just like Pretoria Guards of Rome.”

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But after all, Lord Ripon was really sympathetic towards the Indians. Actually he had no fault, and his position was "Between Scilla and Charybdis." Lt. Governor Sir Rivers Thompson and others were against him. We quite agree with the views of the then editor of Hindu Patriot :—"A few days before the commencement of the past year, had been announced the concordant with the European and Anglo Indian Defence Association upon the ill-fated Ilbert Bill. Throughout the prolonged and bitter controversy caused by this unfortunate measure, the native community had given Lord Ripon a loyal, warm and enthusiastic support. Nevertheless their hopes received a rude shock when the late Viceroy set his heart upon domestic reform ; little did he think of the difficulties which he set his path. Surrounded by a Bureaucracy tenacious of their own powers and by the European community jealous of their own privileges, Lord Ripon found himself placed in an extremely difficult and delicate position, and some of his whole-some schemes for the advancement of the country were ship-wrecked unseen then. The task of reform in India is difficult in any case, but it becomes hopeless when it is imposed by obstructions prepared for at the very Council table of the Government House."

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Lalmohon too spoke about this in Kensington Town Hall*.

"Well, gentlemen, I must confess that for a time it seemed as if the feelings of loyalty to the throne and of grateful admiration for the Viceroy, were about to give way to resentment and sullen discontent. It seemed as if my countrymen were about to loose all faith in the sincerity of English Statesmen or at any rate in their capacity and power to do Justice to us, when the Anglo Indian community were interested in the perpetuation of injustice and oppression. But, gentlemen, when we had time for reflection and after the outburst or disappointment better counsels prevailed. We recognised the earnestness with which Lord Ripon had laboured for the good of the people. We recognised the difficulties the Viceroy had to encounter. We felt that a Viceroy, however good and conscientious he might be, and none could be better or more conscientious than Lord Ripon, we felt that such a Viceroy, unless he also happened to be gifted with more than ordinary strength of mind, would perhaps be powerless to do much good to us, if he is to be thwarted at every step and opposed openly and in secret by the whole pack of permanent officials in India. I might go further that it is hardly of much use for you to send out a good man to India like Lord Ripon, if he is to have as his immediate subordinates men like the Lt. Governor of Bengal, men who are constantly insulting the Indian National sentiment and popular feeling" (Cries of shame and hissing).

* Lecture on Friday, 4th April, 1884.

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Now although the fate of the Ilbert Bill turned out to be abortive, the Bengalees learnt a good deal out of this. The British taught them lessons of unity and they in turn outdid their English friends. The incarceration of Surendranath afforded them a practical illustration and as the *Hindu Patriot* rightly observed "they faithfully reproduced the example set by the European Community when the editor of the *Bengalee* news-paper was committed by the full Bench of the High Court to the Presidency Jail on a charge of contempt of court". The difference, moreover, was while British friends did not hesitate to use unparliamentary language and often times indulged in insulting expressions, the Bengalees in return never exceeded the limits of decency. The "Hindu Patriot" of the same date further remarked "although our enemies taunted us that the hardy races of Upper India had no sympathy for the weak Bengalees, the demonstrations in the North-western Provinces, the Punjab, Oudh and the Bombay and the Madras Presidencies amply testified however, to the common feeling that pervaded through all classes of the people of the whole of India". (*Hindu Patriot*, Jan., 7, 1884.)

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II. SURENDRANATH'S INCARCERATION

To come to Surendranath, Mr. Justice Norris, a judge of the Calcutta High Court for the purpose of examining whether the *Salagram*—Hindu religious-symbol—of Narayana, belonging to the house of one Batukanath Pandit of Burrabazar, was recent or old, ordered it to be brought to the court for identification. Babu Bhuban Mohan Das, (father of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and) editor of "Brahmo Public Opinion" was the first to comment on the 'Zubardasti, and objectionable conduct of the judge in his paper* on the 26th April, 1883 and two days later Surendranath went a bit higher in the condemnation of the judge in his paper 'The Bengalee' in the following, amongst other words :—

"We have now amongst us a judge who if he does not actually recall to mind the days of Jeffrys and Scroggs has certainly done enough within the short time that he has filled the High Court Bench to show how unworthy he is of the high office and how

*"Mr. Justice Norris is determined to set the Hughly on fire. The last act of Zubardasti on his lordship's part was the bringing of a Salagram a stone idol into court for identification.

It does seem to us that some public steps should be taken to put a quietus to the wild eccentricities of this young and raw dispenser of Justice".

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by nature he is unfit to maintain those traditions of dignity which are inseparable from the office of the highest court in the land", (Bengalce. April, 28, 1883).

These were the days when the country was convulsing with the Ilbert Bill agitation from one end to the other and as even the 'Englishman' remarked—"The action of Mr. Justice Norris in reference to the bringing of the Hindu idol into court had, trembled through the whole pulse of the Indian community".

Mr. Justice Norris did not, however, swallow the invectives of the 'Political demagogue' as he considered Mr. Surendranath then to be. Immediately he charged him with contempt of court and committed him to a full Bench for the offence although in his explanation the editor expressed regret for the same. Sir Richard Garth, then Chief Justice was the Presiding Judge of the Full Bench and sentenced Surendranath to civil jail for two months, Mr. Justice Rames Chandra Mitra (afterwards Sir) one of the Judges of the Bench holding, however, different view. He expressed that in a similar case like this (Taylor case) Sir Barnes Peacock the previous Chief Justice had awarded only fine and in this case too, the offence did not call for a sentence of imprisonment at all.

All the same the sentence stood according to the majority decision.

On the memorable day of May, 5, 1883, when the sentence on Surendranath was pronounced, a

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large procession of students led by Ashutosh Mukherjee (afterwards Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, Acting Chief Justice, Calcutta High Court) gathered in front of the High Court Buildings. Babu Paresh Nath Ghosh, the renowned Gymnast and wrestler and afterwards a teacher of Dacca Jubilee School, was one of the processionists. On the pretext of helping the sentries and obstructing the crowd, he held the door panes and none could in front pass him through, but the unlucky guards were at their wit's end to see that students easily glided through in between his two big legs offering them an easy entrance and in a moment hundreds rushed into the court room and others crowded in the court-yard. Young Chittaranjan Das then a student of third class was also one of them. Promotho Nath Roy another college-student and a brother-in-law of late eminent Monomohan Ghose, Bar-at-law, was charged with breaking a window-pane and had, therefore, to go to jail for a week as he denied to pay a fine of Rs 20/- imposed on him.

After the release of Surendranath on July, 4, 1883, the country was vociferous on all parts in meetings, processions and addresses of welcome, and the students responded to him most. Whenever he used to ask—"Who of you will be Garibaldi and Mazzinis?"—the reply used to come in chorus "All-all".

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III CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

The Bengalees were also very much wounded at another instance besides Ilbert Bill movement and the punishment inflicted on Surendranath. Although this movement was confined within the intelligentsia, yet the Govt's policy of race-discrimination filled every body's heart with bitterness. This movement arose in connection with Civil Service, about which we incidentally mentioned in page 64.

Lord Macaulay introduced the English education with a view to confer equal rights to the natives of this country in administration. Section 87 of the Charter Act of 1833 which was reintroduced during the reign of Lord William Bentick ran thus :

"No native of the said territories nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein shall, by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent or colour be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the company."

These words were re-echoed during the Proclamation of Queen Victoria which ran thus—

"And it is our further will that so far as may be our subjects of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to office in our service—the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge".

By virtue of these two promises the Indians were

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permitted to appear at the Civil Service examination by getting through which, they might also be judges and magistrates like the British Civilians. As a result of these promises given effect to, Satyendranath Tagore being successful in the Indian Civil Service in 1863 A.D. secured the post of a Magistrate in the Bombay Presidency. In 1869 A.D., Surendranath, Ramesh Chandra and Beharilal also got through the Civil Service Examination. But seeing the number of natives increasing in such highly responsible posts, Lord Lytton, reactionary as he was, sent a despatch recommending withholding of such right from the Indians but Lord Cranbrook, the Secretary of State for India did not approve of it.

Lord Lytton's object was, however, fulfilled by an other means.

He was successful in getting the age-limit of 19 years for Indian candidates to sit at the examination. He expressed pleasure that his object was fulfilled. Now to sit for examination at the age of 19, a student had to stay and study in England at least for three years before. But few parents would have allowed their sons to leave for distant land beyond seas at such a tender age. Experience further showed that no student had hitherto appeared at the examination before at least 19 years and six months had passed. It was physically impossible to do so.

Due to this disability there was a great movement

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here as well as in England and both Lalmohon and Surendranath and a few others inspired it. Lord Ripon in order to abolish this disability sent two despatches on 26-9-83 and on 17th April, 1884 with a view to holding that examination both in England and in India and for allotting additional marks in Sanskrit and Arabic literatures; but although both himself and Sir C. P. Ilbert were for removing the disability, other members of the Council were against it and Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for India did not support him. Thus although Lord Ripon granted the blessings of the Local Self Government Act and did his best to conciliate the people by his liberal and conciliatory policy, public feeling rose to a pitch and by the time he left the shores of India in December, 1884, the country was sufficiently expressive of an awakening.

IV. LORD RIPON'S RETIREMENT.

Then followed the retirement of Lord Ripon to the great regret of all, and the country went, as it were, mad after him. The voice of Unity echoed and re-echoed throughout the length and breadth of India.

Lord Ripon first went to Darjeeling on some work and on his way he was accorded a tremendous ovation by a long and densely crowded procession extending from Sealdah Station to the Government House.

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It was something of a unique and unparalleled character which beggars all description. None within living memory witnessed so much respect, gratitude and earnestness with which practically the whole of Bengal thronged the public streets, the maidan and the window-sides. Then again, the enthusiasm with which the Indians gave him a hearty send off throughout the stations of all provinces lying between Calcutta and Bombay was unimaginable. India rang up in one voice, "If it is real, what does it mean?" Mr. A. O. Hume, I.C.S. who was the Chief Secretary to the Government of India was greatly surprised.

What however was required to give a cultural outlook and make this new feeling deep-seated was Literature and in that domain too, great truths were revealed by a Rishi (Sage) and we propose to deal with those in the next Chapter.

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BANKIM CHANDRA—THE PROPHET.

Now while the country was passing through the political changes, the intelligentsia was equally awakened to its miserable condition, its woes and its future, and at such a time Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's famous novels and writings shaped the ideals of "Young Bengal" in a great degree and he was the most popular cultural leader of the age as also of the coming ages.

As I expressed before, Bankim Chandra was the seer of the age—the prophet for the whole of Indian thought. He gave the idea of an All India Organisation, how Bengal and the Punjab, Madras and Maharastra would re-act each other, but since the Bengalee being the first recipient of the fruits of English education evinced a greater liking than any of his neighbours for the imitation of the west, Bankim asked him to turn to his own house. I have narrated the piece "Our Janmabhumi Mother" in pages. Then came the immortal "Bandemataram" song, followed soon by the novel Anandamath. But all the three—the piece, the song and the novel are pervaded by one central idea—"the Love of the Motherland."*

* The novel contains the song but the latter had been composed much earlier.

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Thus Bankim Chandra invoked the 'Mother' and asks his countrymen to raise the mother sunk in the deep abyss of the water. He calls others—"Come, ye brothers, let us jump to that vast ocean without fathom—to the unknown abyss, raise the Mother from it and carry her to our homes. There is no doubt darkness, all pervading, but what fear would baffle us? The stars yonder are rising and setting, they will guide us as lights. So brothers, get yourself determined, drive, move, smite the vast waters so vigorously that we may succeed to rescue and carry the Golden Mother on our heads. What fear? Worst is to sink, but what is the value to the life of one whose Mother is engulfed in the great abyss?" (Matriheener Jivane Kaj Ki).

Thus we get his idea—free your country and to that end death is no question, for what would be value of a man under bondage?

Bankim goes still further. To him sacrifice of life is nothing as compared with Bhakti (devotion). One should give his whole, and life is only a component of the whole. The difference between the two has been explained in the novel and since to many of our countrymen "Anandamath" has acted as the Bhagabat Geeta for over half a century, I would give here the true significance, whatever space it might take in the narrative. In the first pages of Anandamath we find—

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"A very long-stretch forest, greater portion of trees of which is Sal. Besides, there were trees of various species. It seems as if an endless column of dark green foliage by the intermingling of the leaves of various trees is there. The whole forest seems as if it is without any gap or rift, even the light can not reach there. It is pitch dark below, even in the full moon, the light is faint. No person ever goes inside it. Endless murmuring of the leaves and the voices of wild birds and animals makes the only noise. No other sound than this could be heard.

"There is this vast forest full of blinding darkness. It was again night. It was about midnight. The night too is very dark, nothing can be seen. The darkness inside the forest may be comparable to that inside the earth.

The birds and the beasts were totally silent. How many millions of animals, birds, insects and worms live in that forest? But none is making any sound. Better that this darkness could be felt, than described.

In that forest stretching to eternity, in that dreamy night of utter darkness in the midst of uncommon quietitude, was heard a voice—

"Shall not my desire be fulfilled?"

But the sound died shortly in the forest. Who could then say that in the midst of the forest, any human voice was heard at all? After a long pause

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the voice was again heard, by smothering that stillness, as it were—

“Shall not my desire be fulfilled ?”

Thrice was the sea of darkness disturbed, and the answer came at last :

“What is your offer ?”

“My life”, the voice rejoined.

“But life is a negligible matter. Every body can give it up. What more can you give ?”

“What more have I, what more can I give ?” said the voice again.

The reply came with extreme distinctness—

“Bhakti (devotion)”.

Bankim thus made it clearly understood—

“Love your country with full devotion and for that give up your all, devote yourself to the service of the mother and be fraternally disposed to all your countrymen.”

Next Bankim chalked out our programme of action. Agitation would not serve our purpose and he was against the “Begging Policy” as was pursued then. He said ;

“This would not do, nothing is gained by begging. But stand on your legs”.

Thus through his “Kamalakanta” a humourous character having nothing in life, with no attachment for any body, but addicted to opium, Bankim gives

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his masterly discourse on the "Begging Method in Politics." He proceeds—

"Our desire is to discuss politics every week and in every day, but for politicians may I put one simple good thing to them ? Even a court-peon got his father-in-law's house, but has a nation, which was conquered by seventeen cavalry soldiers only, politics at all ? Politics may grow in other countries, but it has no chance of its seed being in the least productive here.

"I was thinking thus when I noticed Shiboo Kolu's ten years old grandson taking rice in a plate in the court-yard. A white dog saw it from a distance. Gazing it for a time he whipped out his tongue. The mass of white rice is adorning the plate like white flowers. I saw the belly of the dog as empty as anything. The dog gazed and gazed, stood on, stretched his body backward and forward and yawned. Then thinking hard he advanced step by step very slowly and cautiously. Once and again he cast slanting glance towards rice-ful mouth of Kalu's son and advanced step by step. All on a sudden through the grace of opium I gained intuitive insight and I found this is what they call politics and that *this dog was a politician*. Then with greater attention I saw that the dog began to cast his dice like a veteran politician. The dog found that Kalu's son did not say anything, in fact he was very generous, the dog came near him and sat on his paws.

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He wagged his tail slowly and gazing at the face of Kalu's son, took his breath stretching out his tongue now and again. Seeing his skeleton-like body, sagging belly, earnest look, and rapid breathing, Kalu's son sucking well a fish-bone, threw it at the dog. The dog with much relish and being mad with joy began to chew, lick, swallow and digest that juice of fish-bone. His eyes closed in enjoyment.

"When he finished so well with that fish-bone business, the shrewd politician thought it better to have another bone. Thinking thus he again looked up in supplication on the boy's face. He saw that the boy was exceedingly busy in devouring the rice by mixing molass and tamarind—he did no more cast glance towards the dog. Then the dog took a bold move—why should not he, he being a veteran politician? That politician mustering courage proceeded a little forward. Once again he yawned, but even at that Kalu's son did not look at him. Then the dog began to make a very mild sound. Probably he was saying, "Oh King of Kings, the son of Kalu, this poor chap's belly is not filled". Then Kalu's son looked at him. There was no more fish.

So he threw a handful of rice at him. And the dog too began to devour it with joy. Just at this time Kalu's wife came out and finding a dog devouring rice by her son's side, she with her eyes red with fury throw a bamboo-chip at the dog. The politician

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being hurt tucked up his tail, and ran as fast as he could by making various sounds”.

Presenting the above picture of political agitation and “Begging Policy” or “moderate policy”, Bankim wrote again—

“On the other side, a big bull came and forcibly ate the fodder—did not move an inch for fear of beating by cudgel. All the efforts of Kalu’s wife proved abortive. At last she cleared herself off and entered into the house while the bull finishing off the fodder to his heart’s content, proceeded to his destination, with a rolling gait and leisurely posture. He cared none.”

Bankim has through the above figurative tale* directed us to take up politics of the bull—to stand on our shoulders—and discard the other method of the whining and begging policy, or in other words, “Self-reliance and Courage constitute the real politics in Bankim’s philosophy.”

Now does Bankim show in the Bandematorom Song in ‘Anandamath’ published in the book form in 1882* where Mother Janmabhumi is described in all her splendour, what does the word Mother mean, what wealth and resources she will yield, what kind of unity is required for her sons, and the song has

* Bangadarshan, Falgun, 1284 B.S. * Bangadarsan from
Chaitra 1287 (1881, March) to Baisakh, 1289, May, 1882.

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automatically become the National Song of the Indian National Congress—the Greatest Independence Organisation for the whole of India.

The song runs thus :—

“Bande Mataram

Sujalang, Sufalang,

Malayaja Sitalang,

Shasya Shyamalng, Mataram.

Shubhra jyotsna pulokito jaming

Phulla Kushumita drumadala Shobhining.

Suhasining Sumadthurabhashining

Sukhadang Baradang, Mataram.

Saptakoti Kantha Kala Kala Nindada Karale

Dwisapta Kotirbhujairdhrita Khara Karabale,

Abala Kenoma Eta bale,

Bahubaladharining Namami Tarining,

Ripudala barining, Mataram.

Tumi Viday Tumi dharma,

Tumi Hridi Tumi Marma,

Tvanghi Frana Sarire,

Bahute Tumi Ma Sakti,

Hridaye tomi Ma bhakti,

Tomaree Pratima Gari Mandire Mandire.

Tvanghi Durga dasa praharana Dharining,

Kamala Kamal Dalabiharini,

Bani Vidyadayinee Namami Tvang.

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Namami Kamalang Amalang Atulang,
Sujalang Sufalang Mataram,

Bande Mataram.

Shyamalang Saralang Sushmitang Bhusitang
Dharaning Bharaning Mataram."

This song was translated by Sri Aurobinda Ghose
and the correct rendering in prose is given below—

"I bow to thee, Mother,
Richly watered, richly fruited,
Cool with winds of the south,
Dark with the crops of the harvests,
The Mother !

"Her strands rejoicing in the glory of the
moon-light

Her hands clothed beautifully with her
trees in flowering bloom

Sweet of laughter, sweet of speech,
The mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss
Terrible with the clamorous shout of

seventy million throats,
And the sharpness of swords raised in twice
seventy million hands.

Who saith to thee, Mother, that thou art weak ?
Holder of multitudinous strength,

I bow to her who saves, to her who drives
from her the armies of foemen,

The Mother !

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Thou art knowledge, thou art conduct,
Thou art heart, thou art soul,
For thou art the life in our body,
In the arm thou art might, O Mother,
In the heart, O Mother, thou art love and faith,
It is thy image we raise in every temple.
For thou art Durga, holding her ten
 weapons of war,
Kamala at play in the lotuses,
And Speech, the Goddess, giver of all lore,
To thee I bow !
I bow to thee, Goodess of wealth, pure and
 peerless,
Richly watered, richly fruited, the Mother !
I bow to thee Mother
Dark-hued, candid,
Sweetly smiling, jewelled and adorned,
The holder of wealth, the lady of plenty,
The Mother !

The song has been curtailed to suit all nationalities and as the National Song for India it now applies to the 30 crores of the people of India instead of only seven crores of Bengal. It now runs :

**"Tringsa Koti Kantha Kala Kala Ninada Karale
Dwitringsha Kotirbhujaidhrita Khara Karabale,
Abala Kena Ma Eta Bale"**

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After the congress split at Surat, there was a Maharashtra conference at Amaraoti, where Sri Arabindo gave the true significance of the song, when the meeting opened with the song in the presence of the Maharashtra Chief, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and of Messers Khaparde, Munje and others. Sri Arabindo said : *

"The song is not only a national anthem as the European nations look upon their own, but one replete with mighty power being a *sacred mantra*, revealed to us by the author of "Ananda Math", who might be called an inspired Rishi. The mantra was not an invention, but a revivication of the old mantra which became extinct so to speak by the treachery of one Navakissen. The mantra of Bankim was not appreciated in his own day, and he predicted that there would come a time when the whole of India would resound with the singing of the song and the word of the prophet was miraculously fulfilled.

"The meaning of the song was not understood then because there was no patriotism except such as consisted in making India the shadow of England and other countries. The so-called patriots of the time might have been well-wishers of India but

* Vide his Lecture at Amraoti (Berar) on January, 29, 1908.

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certainly not ones who loved her. One who loved his mother, never looked to her defects, never disregarded her as an ignorant, superstitious, degraded and decrepit woman.....”.

Arabindo then unfolded the hidden meaning of the song before the audience which sat as dumb as statues and listened, as if, to a prophet revealing to them the higher mysteries of life. Arabindo concluded with a most pathetic appeal to true patriotism and extorted the audience to love the mother-land and sacrifice everything to bring about her salvation.

There remains then the problem of Hindus and Moslems. To Bankim the dealings between the Hindus and Mahomedans are not to be considered simply as a formal matter of shaking hands in meetings and quarreling elsewhere, but it goes to the root. We have seen how Bankim depicted characters like Chandsha Fakir, Osman, Mobarok, Mirkasim, Dalani, Daria ; and Ayesha in his first novel “Durgeshanandini” has surpassed all kinds of characters of all novels. But he did not feel any delicacy in depicting the dark side of persons too, be those of Mahomedans or Hindus. An impartial observer will judge him from the following conversation between the Fakir and Sitaram Roy of Bhusana who wanted to have the ideal “Hindu Kingdom” at Mahammadpur. The Fakir was seated on the door

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of and very near the deity "Laksmi Narayan".
Astonished, Sitaram enquired :—

"Who sits there ?"

"A Fakir" was the reply.

Sitaram—A Mussalman ?

Fakir—"Yes, please".

Sitaram—Ah, all spoiled !

Fakir—What ails you—and what is spoiled for a big Zeminder like you ?

Sitaram—What ! a Mahomedan in a temple !

Fakir—What is the harm, has the deity been soiled thereby ?

Sitaram—Assuredly, what nonsense overpowers you !

Fakir—What is this deity ? What does he do ?

Sitaram—He is Narayan (God) Vishnoo. He creates, He protects and He destroys.

Fakir—Who created you ?

Sitaram—Narayana.

Fakir—Who created me ?

Sitaram—It is He. He is the God. He has created everybody. He is also present in every being.

Fakir—If he has not been soiled by creating a Mahomedan Fakir or living in him too, how can He be soiled if a Mussalman Fakir is in the temple ? With such intellect you aspire to establish a Hindu kingdom ! Fakir continued—

"Listen, O, dear, if you really aspire to have an ideal kingdom, you must look to the Hindus and

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Mahomedans with equal eyes. If you do not observe strict equality, you would be a failure to have your ideal kingdom in this region which is inhabited by both Hindus and Mahomedans alike. Your kingdom will be one of sins and impiety. It is only one who created a Hindu or a Mahomedan. He who created a Hindu has also thought fit to create a Mahomedan. Both are His sons and both are your subjects. Do not be guided by customs or prejudices and create a division. Creating a distinction between a subject and subject, race and race, party and party engenders sins and a state or kingdom of sins or impiety does not subsist.*

Sitaram—Do you not find that a Mahomedan is creating the difference ?

Fakir—True, and it is for this such a state is going to rack and ruin. But as God is present both in a Hindu and also in a Mahomedan, why should you make the difference ? I am a Mahomedan, but I do not observe any difference between a Hindu and a Mahomedan.

Eventually this Fakir became the best friend, philosopher and guide of Sitaram and left for Mecca only when Sitaram deviated from righteousness and morality and took to ill conceived varighteous plans.

Bankim not only spoke in the same strain for

* Sitaram, 1st Edition and "Prachar" 1291 B. S.

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his countrymen for Rama Kaibarata and Hassim Sheikh, representing the peasantry, but also in Anandamath spoke distinctly—

“Mother will be propitiated then and then only, when all her sons without distinction will learn to call her as the Mother”.

We thus get from Bankim all the processes of Nation-building before even the Congress came into being and those may be summarised as follows :—

(1) The object of the Indian people should be the deliverance of the country from slavery.

(2) To do this, you must not only be prepared to give everything including even life, in the honest and devotional endeavours for attaining freedom.

(3) There must be unity, all the sons of the mother must demand with united efforts.

(4) A Hindu must treat a Mahomedan as his brother and

(5) The peasants and poor men are not be ignored.

The pains of poor peasants as Rama Kaibarta and Hashin Shaikh who suffer for us and are not given sufficient remuneration for their pains have to be considered in full.

(6) To have knowledge within, knowledge of things outside has also to be acquired.

(7) Deliverance is not possible with Thanga,

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Lathi (sticks or lathies)—but with self-realisation and Sadhana.

(8) The whining and begging policy is to be discarded and 'self-help' and dependance on oneself has to be resorted to.

(9) Peasantry and labour are to be sympathised and improved.

(10) Women must share with husbands in the deliverance of the country and Santi and Profulla are the ideal of womanhood. Bankim used to say 'A character like Rani Lakshmibai is rare in history and even the British Generals used to extol her "as the only man amongst the generals of the Mutiny". Thus we find that if our countrymen rever~~e~~ him as the sage and Rishi of India's freedom they are only doing the rightmost thing and showing the world that they know to pay proper homage to the leaders of thought. Let us worship our mother with strength in arms and devotion in heart :

"Bahute Tumi Ma Sakti,
Hridaye Tumi Ma Bhakti,
Tomari Pratima Gari,
Mandire Mandire".

But what knowledge (Jnana) Bankim aimed at ? Bankim says through Mahapurush to Satyananda in "Anandamath" :

"Through want of knowledge you have *won the*

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battle with weapons acquired through robbery. But your country has not been freed. No good result can be achieved through impiety.....

Satya—Master, as I am unsuccessful to free my country, I lay down my life here.

Mahapurush (Chikitsak)—In this state of ignorance? (Ajnane?) Follow me to the Himalayas and you will see Mother in clear vision.

Mahapurush took Satyananda by hand. Now is seen *Jnana* holding *Bhakti*, *Dharma* holding *Karma*—

Action based on piety would thus be the only means for the realisation of “Mother” in all splendours and that is Bankim’s Philosophy of Patriotism.

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FROM RELIGIOUS REVIVAL TO POLITICS.

So in the twinkling of an eye we now step into the year 1884. It is now only a year left for the sitting of the Indian National Congress. But the ideas of our countrymen who got some education in English, became perverted. They forgot their nationality, their manners and above all their religion. The ordinary Hindus as also our Mahomedan brethren were then backward and the middle class Hindus only counted ; but as they too were themselves denationalised, no useful achievement towards nationalism was expected of them. "Young Bengal" was the preponderating factor at the time.

YOUNG BENGAL.

'Young Bengal' as the ordinary intelligentsia was then called, consisted of people who had little faith in God. They were mostly materialistic, some turned to Christianity, others leaned to Brahmoism and most people lost faith in Hindu religion. Hindus too generally lost the essence of religion and cared more for forms than for spirit. Differences amongst various

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sects of the Hindus e. g. Shaktas and Vaishnavas too became acute. Hindu priests again, given mostly of evil ways commanded little respect. The Brahmos too were divided into three classes—the Adi, Nava-bidhan and Sadharan. What still some men of education had, the ordinary men with smattering of education were rather more hopeless. In the course of commenting on Madhusudan's "Is this civilisation?" Bankim Chandra thus describes* of them—

"The reformer who never gets beyond tipsy, harangues full of English expressions, should not be confounded, as he often is, by Europeans with the really civilised class. But it can not be denied that he is a fair representation of the great horde of partly educated Babus, whose only claim to enlightenment lies in the fact that they drink, wear shabby trousers and stammer out barbarous English. These are the men, who swarm in every office and plague officials with endless applications for employment, crowd the thoroughfares of the native town in the evening, drain the liquor-shops and form the majority of his audience when Babu Keshab Chandra Sen lectures in the Town Hall. Of education they have had

* Calcutta Review, Vol. 52. 1871, reviewing on "Literary Men" by Babu Harimohan Mukerjee.

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nothing worth the name. Having spent a few years very profitably in learning smattering of English at home or Anglo-vernacular school, they started, in life, if poor, at the age of eighteen as umedwars, if rich, they devoted themselves from the same age with their whole strength to swinish pleasures. The country is over-run with men of this sort and Mr. Dutt's picture is true in life ; but they must not be confounded with the really cultivated class, who, inspite of all that has been said regarding the spread of English education, are comparatively few in number."

FROM "SRICHAITANYA TO RAMKRISHNA"

India, however, is a favoured country of the gods, and has always been saved by Providence. If we take our readers to the old days of the 16th century there was the worst degradation at that time. Exclusion of Hindus, by the leaders of society even for petty offences e.g., slight association with Mahomedans, became the order of the day. Not to speak of interdining, smelling of Mahomedan-dishes too was considered as half-dining. Thus even during the peaceful days of Hoshen Shaw the independent King of Bengal, the Hindu society was being reduced of its strength. Rupa-Sonatan the trusted officers

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of the state were looked down in Hindu Society because they held the titles 'Sagar Millick' and 'Dabir Khas' as given by His Majesty the Nawab. At such a critical time, Srichaitanya Mahaprabhu saved the country by his cosmopolitan religion of love. His catholicity made Hindus and Mahomedans embrace each other without losing anybody's religion. Then again in the beginning of the 19th Century, when the Baptist Mission was started at Serampore, various attempts were made by the Christian Missionaries to baptise the Hindus whom they termed as heathens, as also to preach against Indian customs and religion. It was Raja Rammohan Ray alone who again with his monoetheistic Hindu doctrines silenced the Missionaries. When the latter started "Gospal Magazine", 'Friend of India' and "Samachar Darpan"—three well-known papers, in 1818, and the last in Bengali, Rammohan through his "Brahmanical Magazine" (1821) a Bengali English periodical preached his Vedantic principles. To the Missionaries against whose policy the magazine directed its attention, he addressed* thus—

. "It is ungenerous to do, as Genzhis Khan and the Aracanese did abuse the religion of the conquered. In consideration of the small huts in which

Bengali Literature and News paper (Calcutta Review P. 147, Vol. XII).

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Brahmnis of learning, generally reside and the simple food such as vegetables etc. which they are accustomed to eat and the poverty which obliges them to live upon charity, the Missionary gentlemen may not, I hope, abstain from controversy through contempt of them, for truth and true religion do not always belong to wealth and power, to high names or lofty palaces”.

Through Ram Mohan's attempts the tide was turned and conversion to Christianity halted at that time.

Half a century after, came again a condition of hopelessness which affected mostly the intellegentsia and that has been referred to in the beggning of the chapter. As such a day of denationalisation Ramkrishna Parahansa came with his universal religion —“As the views are, so are the ways”. “Jata Mat Tata Path.” To him God was one, whatever name we give to him—Allah or God, Hari or Jehova, He is only one and we are all—Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Zorostrians—all are—his sons. This universal religion of toleration has been the means of unification, not only of all religious faiths but is also the means how different classes of people—Hindus Mahomedans etc. may be brought together and all may acclaim in one voice “We are Indians first—Hindus and Mahomedans—afterwards”.

But Ramkrishna was not the only person who

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came out with his 'New Religion' at that time although it became the accepted doctrine of most of the sensible persons within a short period. Besides people did not get at first his trace or touch, simple and unostentatious as he was.

There were till other faiths then coming out with their views. The Adi Brahma Samaj was there with Tattabodhini, but it failed to reach men's minds. Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachuramoni again was earnest in proving the superiority of the Hindu religion by aiming at scientific explanation of Hindu practices, but the Hindu thinkers refused to extend their approval to this propaganda. Krishna Prasanna Sen no doubt preached a nationalistic religion but it was based more on a narrower foundation. These turned the tide a bit but did not serve the purpose of time. Bankim Chandra the greatest thinker of the age turned from the novelist to be a preceptor by basing religion on Anusilan (culture) as to how a man could be full by fully developing body, mind and soul. He based his ideas of Hinduism on one side and Positivism of Augustus Comte on the other and tried to set Srikrishna as the ideal of a "full man". The religion he preached—his 'Dharmatatta' found its expression in the two newly-started magazines ('Prachar' and 'Navajivan'), but the papers had poor

* Buddhists and Sikhs are included in the Hindus.

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circulation, probably because people could not appreciate his reasonings although for the grandeur of views and the reasons they contained, he was rightly called the "Apostle of Culture" by no less a person than the Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumder, a friend and colleague of Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen.

Keshab Chandra Sen who had seceded from Adi Brahma Samaj and started his "New Dispensation" some years ago became about the time, I am speaking of, practically a Hindu Yogi (Sanyashi) and preached also his religion of love, not forgetting even to have the drama "Naba Vrindaban" based on his views, staged. But Keshab too, great as he was, had a limited following.

Girish Chandra Ghosh the great dramatist and father of the Indian Stage with no pretension to preach any religion had his drama "Chaitanya Lila" staged and it at once captured the imagination of the people. Until now Girish had no touch with Ramkrishna, but its praise through all mouths drew even the Saint to see the play at the Theatre.

As to how the drama worked with the people, we have from the "Hindu Patriot" the following—

"The extraordinary success of Chaitanya Lila must have been largely due to the fact of its being the first of the passion-plays of the modern stage of Bengal and as such to have appealed forcibly to the

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religious instincts of an arduously religious people and to have captivated the imagination and innate good feelings of a sceptical audience whom a revolutionary system of our education had strongly and not unnaturally worked upon.....“Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh has deserved well of his co-religionists and his countrymen by his endeavours to improve the moral tone of our age, to popularise the Hindu religion and to develop the slender literary and dramatic resources of the country. Our stage, as all right-minded men must concede is after all beginning to be what it ought to be, namely, a power for good in the country and its influence must have already been felt and strongly to have succeeded in evoking hostile criticism in quarters in which the religion of the Hindu is expected to find its least favour”.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

For the time being the Theosophical Society however, it must be admitted with gratitude, did wonderful work amongst the intelligentsia of the period.

Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky were in India since 1879 and began to preach to Hindus, “A Hindu had no reason to be ashamed of his past and rush for wisdom and inspiration from the mate-

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realistic west", To Col. Olcott this "Chaitanya Lila" acted as a great inspiration in preaching his new religion. This is what he wrote from Adyar on Oct. 17, 1885, to the Editor, Reis and Rayyat :

"As for 'Chaitanya Lila' I unhesitatingly affirm that it is impossible for any one but a "civilised peg-drinking Babu like the one mis-behaving himself on the front bench of the orchestra, to witness the play without a rush of spiritual feeling and religious fervour".

"It is one of the three dramas (Sitaram and Haris (h)andra being the other two) which taught me more and made me more deeply admire and understand the stories that respectively illustrate than would have ten times the same number of hours spent over books. I think my enthusiastic appreciation of Aryan character is to some extent due to the impressions thus conveyed".

During those days of Hindu awakening the doctrine of Theosophy on Hinduism as preached by European preachers acted like a miracle from the standpoint of Nationalism too. The Hindu realised his own innerself, his religion and nationalism and this helped him to find a way out of the illusion of

Letter of H. S. Olcott, dated 17th October, 1885 to the editor of the Reis and Rayyat.

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the West. India is thus much indebted to Col. Olcott and his society.

Now to promote universal brotherhood and further the objects of the Theosophical Society, an annual conference was first held at Bombay and next met at Madras in December, 1884. Col. Olcott hoped that "this conference will be the nucleus of the future parliament of India".

So it actually turned out to be. A number of Bengalees of culture used to attend these conferences and amongst others Mr. Janakinath Ghosal (son-in-law of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore) and Mr. Narendranath Sen, Editor, "Indian Mirror" deserve special mention. Mr. Hume who had just retired from Civil Service was also an enthusiastic member of the Theosophical Society and attended the conferences, which brought together men of lead and light, where they talked on other matters also, besides religion. The gathering together of notable persons during the farewell given to Lord Ripon at Bombay in 1884 generated an idea of meeting in various places for political purposes and Messrs Hume, Sen and Ghosal took up the cue. Besides, the idea of having a political congregation like the Delhi Durbar of 1877, was being fostered when the Journalists met at the Durbar for the purpose of giving an address of welcome to the Viceroy (Lord Lytton) and got the inspiration there. These gentlemen formed an association

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there for representing the grievances of the people of the country with Mr. Ganesh Dutt Joshi, founder of the "Poona Sarbojanin Sabha" and Mr. Surendranath Banerjee as leading members for the purpose of expanding its objects further. Joshi came also to Calcutta in the following year. The project however did not proceed further, but Joshi did not forget his own view point.

No doubt the whole of India was affected by the narrow policy of Viceroys like Lord Lytton and the attitude of the British merchants in India, but there is no doubt that Bengal was hit worst and it was in Bengal that the bitterness in consequence expressed itself first. We have spoken of the Indian Association before. Under its auspices a political conference was called at the Albert Hall under the presidentship of Dr. K. M. Banerjee in December, 1883. Messers. Surendra Nath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose took a leading part and Surendra Nath's popularity was at the zenith at the time. The conference was confined to the people of Bengal, although in the opening speech Ananda Mohan remarked,—“It was the first stage towards a National Parliament”. Messers Wilfred Blunt and Saymeour Keay. M. P. were present at the meeting.

In 1884, there was no political conference in Calcutta but the International Exhibition was held here at the Maidan where notable persons

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from all parts of India and various other countries joined.

In 1885 there was again a political conference in December at Calcutta, about the same time, the Indian National Congress met at Bombay. The Hindu Patriot of December, 28, 1885 p. 696 has given the details as follows :—

“A conference of delegates from different parts of the country and representing different political associations was held at the British Indian association Rooms on Friday the 25th instant and the two following days. The conference was convened at the instance of the British Indian Association, the Indian Union and the Indian Association. Delegates from Pabna, Faridpur, Burdwan, Jessore, Krishnagore, Baidyabati, Kantai, Katwa, and the North-western Provinces, the Orissa Peoples' Association and the Bareili Association also sent their representatives. The chair on the first day was taken by Babu Durga Charan Law C. I. E. and the conference was attended by H. M. The Maharaja of Darbhanga, the Hon'ble Rai Sahib Viswanath Narain Mullick, Raja Purna Chandra Singh Bahadoor, the Hon'ble Peary Mohon Mukherjee, Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, Babu Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, Babu Mahesh Chandra Chowdhury, Dr. Gurudas Banerjee and Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee, amongst others.

“The reconstitution of the Legislative councils and

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the Arms Act question were discussed on the first day, the question of retrenchment of expenditure, the Civil Service question and Lord Kimberley's reply were discussed upon on the second* day, and the subjects of third day's discussion were the separation of Judicial from the Executive authority in the administration of criminal justice in the mufasil and the reconstitution of the police. Mr. Cotton took part in the proceedings of the conference and assured the delegates that many of his countrymen in England sympathised with the natives of this country and their desire for more enlarged representation in the Legislative Assemblies of the Empire, but counselled moderation."

THE NUCLEUS OF THE CONGRESS.

The Calcutta conferences as mentioned in the last pages are however quite different from the Indian National Congress, although they helped its birth. A variety of circumstances brought about its first inception, but above anything Mr. Hume (Sir Arthur Octavius Hume, I. C. S.) may rightly be called the Father of the Indian National Congress. He had refused the Lieutenant-Governorship of a province and retired earlier to devote his time and energies for the benefit of India. He had already founded the

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Bombay Presidency Association and also formed a 'Telegraph Union' in Bombay to see that telegrams exaggerating or concealing facts about India were not despatched to London. For a long time he was dreaming of a Conference which would be of a representative character for the whole of India and now he got the field to work for it with the collaboration of Messers Joshi Ghosal, Sen, and others. Mr. Hume was, however at first for a social conference and he had special reasons for the same.

Himself and his co-adjutants were mainly theosophists and as Madame Blavatsky, the chief of the Theosophical Society in India was an inhabitant of Russia with which England was not on good terms, at the time, Mr. Hume thought that the political conference in which the theosophists predominated, might be suspected from the very beginning and the British authorities would nip such an idea in the bud. Things, however, turned a different course, through the grace of the Providence. Mr. Hume met the new Viceroy Lord Dufferin who took charge of the administration in December, 1884 and discussed plans with him. The Viceroy advised him however to have a political conference instead, which would work as a safety-valve to the British Administration. The tension he thought at that time between the Indian people and the Europeans living here was very acute and the government in

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Lord Dufferin's opinion would welcome views of the people through a representative body and set at right where the administration was found defective. Besides in his opinion there could be no unanimity of diverse communities in social matters. This gave a new light to Mr. Hume. As I said before the annual convention of the Theosophical Society met at Adyar, Madras in December, 1884. The delegates who attended this, were all persons, as Mr. Narendranath Sen, Editor of the Indian mirror remarked "fitted both socially and intellectually to be the leaders of the Society". Some of the delegates afterwards met at the house of Dewan Bahadur Raghabendra Rao at Madras, and conceived the idea of a political National Movement for saving the Motherland. A committee of eight members to carry out the work was formed and amongst others Messrs Narendranath Sen, Janaki Nath Ghosal, Dewan Raghunath Rao, and S. Subramanyia, Aiyar, afterwards chief Justice, Madras, were in it.

Some time after in January, 1885, both Mr. Janakinath Ghosal and Dewan Bahadur Raghabendra Rao wrote letters to important personalities of different provinces explaining the necessity and importance of such a political congregation. Many welcomed the above proposal.

They then met in March, 1885 and issued the following circular :—"That a conference of the Indian

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National Congress will be held at Poona from 25th to 31st. December, 1885.

“That the conference will be composed of delegates—composed of leading politicians well acquainted with the English language from all parts of Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

“That the direct subjects of the conference will be

(1) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other.

(2) To discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

“Indirectly this conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament and if properly conducted will constitute in a few years an answerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions. The first conference will decide whether the next one shall again be held at Poona or whether following the precedent of the British Association, the conferences shall be held year by year at different important centres.

The venue of the sitting of the first conference was also decided to be at Poona and a reception committee with Mr. Chiplonkar, Mr. Joshi and others of the Poona Sarbajanin Sabha formed. The Peshwa's Garden near the Parbati Hill was to be utilised for the meeting as also for the residence of all delegates together. The reception committee also was to take



(1) Dadabhai Naoraji
Grand old Man of India
President
Indian National Congress
1886-1893-1906

Mr. A. O. Hume I.C.S
Father of the
Indian National Congress

(3) Sir William Wedderburn
President
Indian National Congress
1889-1910

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charge of requirements of the delegates during stay at Poona including carriage, accomodation, food etc. to be provided for gratuitously. It was believed that exclusive of Poona workers, the Bombay Presidency was to furnish 20 delegates, Madras and Lower Bengal each about the same number and the N. W. Provinces, Oudh and the Punjab together about half the number.

In the course of progress, however, Mr. Hume gave the name of the Congregation as "THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS". He also went to England and acquainted the well-wishers and those who sympathised with Indian aspirations with the views and objects of the organisation. He got encouragement from several liberal members of the Parliament too.

Now when the Indian National Congress would sit at Poona in December, 1885, a political conference was held at Calcutta, as mentioned in the last chapter. Mr Surendra Nath Banerjee was of opinion that Calcutta should be held the centre of all national agitations in India and thus he organised the conference with the help of the Zeminders. Others, however held a different view ; but that was not the only reason for holding a seperate organisation. Mr. Hume apprehended that the association of Surendra Nath who had gone to jail and held at that time extreme views would add to the suspicion of the Government further. Mr. Hume, however, did a

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very right thing in not giving too much importance to the land-holding community at the inception of the congress, and as to Mr. Banerjee too, he very soon changed his opinion.

Let us now see if there were political associations in India at that time when the first session of the Indian National Congress was about to be held.

We have spoken of the British Indian Association and the Indian Association with the branches of the latter body formed in other parts of the province of Bengal. The Bombay Association started by Jugganath Sankersett and Dadabhai Naoroji about the year 1851 was also doing very useful work. Mr. Sett was a Vakil and used to sit in the Bombay Legislative Council since 1863 and as to Dadabhai Naoroji, who does not know the name of the revered grand old man of India? The Bombay Association was afterwards led by persons like Mangaldas Nathubhoy and Naoroji Furdunji.

The Poona Sarbajanin Sabha helped in mass-awakening. But for the indefatigable labours of its secretary Mr. Ganesh Dutt Joshi, the Indian National Congress would not have been started, so easily. Rao Bahadoor Krishnaji Lakshman Nulkar and Sitaramhari Chiplankar were also good and earnest workers.

In Madras, too, political consciousness was awakening. There was at first a small conference held of Government officers known as the Madras Native

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Association. Nationalism began also to spread through the journal 'Hindu' started in 1878. Notable persons like the famous Anand Charlu, Veer Raghachari, Rangi Naidu, G. Subramanya Aiyar, M. Suba Rao, were closely associated with and the paper was started mainly through their efforts.

The Madras Mahajan Sabha was also established in 1881 and conferences were organised once or twice under its auspices.

The Bombay Presidency Association founded by Mr. Hume, Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Budruddin Tyabji (both the latter afterwards judges of the Bombay High Court) and Mr. Pherozshah Metha (afterwards Sir) was another Political Organisation.

Besides these and others, the eminent men like John Bright, Henry Fawcett, Charles Bradlaugh, etc. the friends of India and members of Parliament, were particularly in favour of the Indian's right of election, equal treatment towards them and appointing them to the services according to their merits and qualifications. Many of them were in favour of the Ilbert Bill and they vehemently protested against the great injustice done by the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury in imposing upon India the whole expenses incurred for giving a Ball Party to the Sultan of Turkey. And amongst the Englishmen who remaining at home were very much in favour of doing justice to the Indians, the names of James Cavil, Sir William

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Hunter, Lord Northbrooke, R. T. Reed and Mr. Shlag deserve special mention.

Amongst the civilians of India too, Mr. Hume, Sir Willam Wedderburn and Sir Henry Cotton used always to think that their interests were specially linked with the interests of India. Above all, Mr. Hume however, stands the foremost. He realised that Indians might again be involved in a mutinous affair or a movement like what stirred the Sepoy Mutiny. That is why he wanted to keep the Indian National Movement within reasonable limits of constitutional agitation. It did no doubt good to the British Government but the Indians were no less benefitted by it at a time when every movement by Indians was regarded as seditious. Indeed any attempt for awakening national consciousness without outside help was an impossibility. Mr. Hume thus proved the greatest British friend of India and his inspiring speech to the young graduates on the eve of the first session of the Congress would remind one of a speech from Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak or Mahatma Gandhi or Deshbandhu Chittaranjan.

Thus he spoke—

“And even if the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures or so selfishly wedded to personal concerns that they dare not strike a blow for their country’s sake, then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on, for they deserve nothing better.

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Every nation secures precisely as good a Government as it merits. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation can not, scorning personal care and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for you yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration and a large share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends, are wrong and your adversaries right, then all Lord Ripon's noble aspirations for your good are fruitless and visionary, then, at present at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end ; and India truly neither longs nor deserves anything better government than she enjoys. Only, if this be so, let us hear no more nation's peevish complaints—that you are kept in leading strings and treated like children, for you will have proved yourself such. Men know how to act ; let there be no more complaint of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices ; for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads man to subordinate private ease to public weal, patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are then rightly are these preferred to you, rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and task-masters, they must continue to be. Let the yoke gall your shoulders never sorely until you realise and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness”.

All homage to Mr. Banne, the Father of the Indian National Congress.

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THE FIRST SESSION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

After all the arrangements for holding the first session of the Indian National Congress at Poona had proceeded satisfactorily—the Pandal being complete and accommodation for delegates provided for, through the efforts of the Poona Sarbojanin Sabha, Cholera broke out at the city of Poona to the disappointment of all. Through the efforts of the Bombay Association, the venue was at once changed to Bomday and arrangements for holding the session at the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College on the Gowalia Tank were completed in no time. The authorities of the college generously took up the matter and the delegates too were accommodated in the boarding house of the college. The Grand National Assembly of India met first on the sea beach in the vast atmosphere of the unfathomable. The surroundings, the enthusiasm and spirit of doing good to the country all foretold the future of it.

Everything was ready by the morning of the 27th December and more than hundred representatives came from different provinces. Many high-ranking

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Government officials were also present but they did not take part in the proceedings of the congress.

72 Delegates were present in that first and the most memorable session. In the afternoon of that day, Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Justice Jardine, Colonel Phelps, Professor Wordsworth, popular professor of the Elphinstone College, Bombay, and several others of lead and light welcomed the delegates with hearty cordiality. They were indeed the pioneers and true servants of the people although properly speaking, they were not elected delegates.

The names of the following amongst the delegates deserve special mention.

Bengal—W. C. Bonnerjee, Narendra Nath Sen Janakinath Ghosal, Monomohon Ghose with his wife (who was a spectator), etc. Janaki Babu came as a delegate from Allahabad.

Simla—Mr. Hume. Poona—W.S. Apte and G.G. Agarkar. Lucknow—Gangaprasad Varma.

Bombay—Dadabhai Naoroji, Mr. Rahimatulla Sayani, Kashinath Tryambak Tclang, Pheorze Shah Mahta, D.M. Wacha, B.M. Malabari, N.G. Chandra Bharkar.

Madras—P. Rangiah Naidu, President of the Mahajan Sabha Subramanya Iyer, N. Veer Raghachariar.

Anantapur—P. Keshab Pillai.

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Besides these gentlemen, the following notable personalities amongst the Government officers were also present in the session to express their sympathy :

Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunath Rao, The Hon'ble Mahadev Govinda Ranade (Judge, Small Cause Court, Poona, afterwards Judge, Bombay High Court), Lala Baijnath of Agra, Professor K. Sundar Raman and R.G. Bhandarkar.

The press representatives of the various news papers like Dan Prakas, weekly organ of the Sarbajanin Subha of Poona, Kesari, Nababibhakar, Indian Mirror, The Nassin, the Hindusthani, The Tribune, Indian Union, the Indian Spectator, Induprakash, The Hindu, The Crescent, were also present. Delegates from different parts of the country came as follows :—

Bengal—3, Bombay—18, Madras—8, Karachi—2, Viramgaon—1, Surat—6, Poona—8, Agra—2, Benares—1, Simla—1, Lucknow—3, Allahabad—1, Lahore—1, Ambala—1, Ahmedabad—1, Berhampur. (Madras)—1, Muslipatam—1, Chinghlipatam—1, Tanjore—1, Kumbhakanam—1, Madura—1, Tinneveli—1, Coimbatore—1, Salem—1, Cuddapur—1.

Mr. Hume really loved Bengal. For although he came from Simla he stayed with the delegates from Bengal.

The first session began on the 28th December,



Mr. Woonesh Chandra Bonnerjea
First President of the Indian National Congress
and also President of the year 1892

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1885, and the honour of the first presidentship of the Indian National Congress fell upon the lot of Mr. Woomesh Chandra Bonnerjee of Bengal, the distinguished Bengali Barrister. Originally it was the desire of Mr. Hume that the Lt. Governor of Bombay should take the chair of the President, but Lord Dufferin did not wish that any public servant should be associated with this organisation. He even requested that his personal sympathies with the Congress should be kept private. It was then decided to elect Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, the illustrious Standing Counsel, Calcutta High Court, as the President. It may be noted that Woomesh Chandra had a great liking for European ways of life at the beginning. But the Ilbert Bill agitation first served as an eye-opener to him. Afterwards he became a powerful leader of the time. It was he who first led the farewell party for Lord Ripon in 1884 A. D. He had made Herculean labours to make that function a great success.

In that historic conference of the first session, proposed by Mr. Hume, seconded by S. Subramanya Iyer of Madras and supported by Mr. K. T. Telang, Mr. Woomesh Chandra Bonnerjee, the leader of Bengal was elected to the chair as President of the Congress.

The president expressed gratitude to the assembly as well as to the press-reporters and Govt. officials

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present there and delivered his address in such forceful language that it still rings in our ears—

“Surely never had so important and comprehensive an assemblage occurred within historical times on the soil of India. He claimed for it an entirely representative character. It was true that judged from the standard of the House of Commons they were not the representatives of the people of India in the sense the members of the House were representatives of the constituencies. But if community of sentiments, community of feelings and community of wants enabled any one to speak on behalf of others, then assuredly they might justly claim to be the representative of the people of India. It might be said that they were self-elected, but that was not so. The news that this Congress would be held, had been known throughout the year in the different provinces of India and they all knew that everywhere the news had been received with great satisfaction by the people at large and though no formal elections had been held, the representatives had been selected by all the different associations and bodies and he only wished that all thus selected, had been able to attend instead of their having now to lament the absence of many valued coadjutors whose attendance had been unhappily barred by various unfortunate circumstances”.

Then he detailed out the objects of the Congress and said “I am describing only a few of the objects—these are not all, for our aim will be determined on the proposals”.

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The objects of the Congress are :—

(1) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in all parts of the Empire.

(2) The eradication by direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

(3) The authoritative record after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the important and pressing of the social questions of the day.

(4) The determination of the lines upon and the method by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for active politicians to labour in the public interests.

Mr. Bonnerjee also said :—"Surely there was nothing in these objects to which any sensible and unprejudiced man could possibly take exception and yet on more than one occasion remarks had been made by gentlemen who should have been wiser, condemning the proposed Congress as if it were a nest of conspirators and disloyalists. Let him say once

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for all and in this he knew well after the long informal discussions that they all had amongst themselves on the previous day that he was only expressing the sentiments of every gentleman present, that there were no more thoroughly loyal and consistent well-wishers of the British Government than were himself and the friends around him. In meeting to discuss in orderly and peaceful manner questions of vital importance affecting their well-being, they were following the only course by which the constitution of England enabled them to represent their views to the ruling authority. Much had been done by Great Britain for the benefit of India and the whole country was truly grateful to her for it. She had given them order, she had given them railways and above all, she had given them the inestimable blessings of western education. But a great deal still remained to be done. The more progress the people made in education and material prosperity, the greater would be the insight into political matters and keener their desire for political advancement. He thought that their desire to be governed according to the ideas of government prevalent in Europe was in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government. All that they desired was that the basis of the Government should be widened and the people should have their proper and legitimate share in it. The discussions that would

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take place in this Congress would, he believed, be as advantageous to the ruling authorities as he was sure it would be to the people at large”.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted and passed,

(1) That this Congress earnestly recommends—the promised enquiry into the working of the Indian administration here and in England should be entrusted to a Royal Commission, the people of India being adequately represented therein and evidence taken both in India and England,

Proposed by G. Subramanya Iyer. (Editor ‘Hindu’).

Seconded by Mr. Pherozshah Mehta.

Supported by Mr. Narendra Nath Sen.

(2) The present advisory Council of the Secretary of State for India should be abolished.

Proposer—S. H. Chiplonkar.

Seconder—P. Ananda Charlu.

Mr. Jankinath Ghosal supported this proposal with a very interesting speech.

(3) That this Congress considers the reform and expansion of the supreme and existing Legislative Councils, by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members (and the creation of similar councils for the North-West Provinces and Oudh and also for the Punjab) essential and

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holds that all budgets should be referred to these councils for consideration, their members being moreover empowered to interpellate the Executive in regard to all branches of the administration and that a Standing Committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protests that may be recorded by majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the Executive of the power, which would be vested in it, of overruling the decision of such majorities.

While raising this proposal Mr. Telang said "We do not want nomination but election. We have got the power of having our elected representatives in the Municipality, District and Local Boards according to the promulgation of local self-government by Lord Ripon. We should also strive to obtain our elected members in the Legislative Council of each province by gradually widening the scope of this policy. Our present requirements, at least half the number of the members of the Legislative Council should be elected by us. And gradually the same right of election to be extended to big cities, universities, well-established political organisations, the maffussil Municipalities and the District Boards too."

The Hon'ble S. Subramanya Iyer also remarked "Due to the absence of the right of election, the non-official members of the council are practically power-

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less, because I am speaking from my personal experience that although Government agrees with them in trifling matters, in matters of any policy never budes an inch from their original decision”.

Dadabhai Naoroji said “If the Government granted the reforms and the right of interpellation prayed for, much of the misunderstandings and odium Government had to suffer would be removed”.

Lala Muralidhar said “Real and direct representation must be had to minimise the influence of men who are not true representatives of the country”,

Lalaji could deliver beautiful speeches and could evoke much humour in his addresses.

Mahadeo Govinda Ranadaya opined that it was desirable to have both elected and nominated members in the Secretary of State’s Advisory Council. Mr. Hume pointed out that a substitute for the Secretary of State’s Council as regards extravagant expenditure was provided for in the scheme proposed by the resolution in the power of interpellation and in the financial power. Amongst others, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao thought that a substitute for the India Council was unnecessary. A Parliamentary Committee would be of great advantage by giving publicity to the discussion of the Committee.

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Mr. Narendra Nath Sen thought that a Standing Committee like that of the House of Commons would be good if it contained their own representatives.

(4) Simultaneous examination for Civil Service in India as well as in Britain and raising of age of candidates. The resolution was moved by Mr. D. S. White* President of the Eurasian Association and seconded by Mr. Girija Bhusan Mukherjee.† Mr. Naoroji also took part in the discussion.

(5) The Reduction of military expenditure—That in the opinion of the Congress, the proposed increase in the military expenditure is unnecessary and regard being had to the revenues of the empire and the existing circumstances in the country, excessive.

(6) If it was impossible to reduce the military expenditure, then this should be carried out by retrenchment and by the re imposition of the customs duties

* It will be interesting to Mr. Antony Eden that the First Congress was attended with great enthusiasm by the then president of the Eurasian (now Anglo Indian) Association.

† Girijabhusan was editor of Naba Bibhakar Patrika. He was a Prem Chandra Roy Chand scholar and was a well-known Advocate of Alipore. He also entered the High Court but was cut off quite prematurely.

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and extension of the Licence Tax, together with one Imperial Guarantee to the Indian debt.

(7) Annexation of Upper Burma is the opinion of the Congress unnecessary. But if the Government is determined to conquer it then the whole of Burma should be separated from the Indian Viceroyalty and made as a Crown Colony like Ceylon.

Lord Dufferin had declared war against King Theebaw of Mandalay (Northern Burma) on the suspicion that King Theebaw had entered into a secret pact with the French empire. Theebaw surrendered on 27th November, 1885 and the day after Mandalay was occupied. In January 1886 the whole of Burma was annexed to the British India.

(8) Resolutions be forwarded to all political associations in the country with a request to adopt such measures as may be calculated to advance the settlement of the various questions dealt with in the resolutions.

On Mr. Hume's proposal seconded by Mr. Subramanya Iyer, it was decided to hold the next annual sitting of the Congress in Calcutta. The President Mr. Bonnerjee said "We shall not fail in our duty to extend hospitality towards our guests in Calcutta as far as we can."

When the session was over after three days' sitting, the President was acclaimed with continued cheers. Mr. Hume was greeted thrice with "Three

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cheers for Mr. Hume, the Father of the Congress". Mr. Hume too returned the greetings with "Three cheers for Her Majesty the Queen Empress."

Resolutions of the first session of the congress are to be taken into serious account, as the congress programme was directed on these lines for a long time.

"Three cheers" also continued for long—because Congress at first followed the western model. Our readers will please watch as to when this slogan was replaced by 'Bandemataram'.

After this session was over, the delegates were given a hearty send off.

Here closes the narrative about the origin of the Greatest National Movement of India leaving a glorious memory of the fine work accomplished by the first great National Leaders of India who were the pioneers in working so earnestly for the unity of India. It was only the dawn of our Nationalism seen on the east sky, but the Sun of freedom would have its blaze of the clearest mid-day very soon.

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SECOND SESSION

Although the first session of the Congress was held at Bombay, there is no denying the fact that Calcutta has been the guiding spirit of the Congress-movement of India. I do not intend to repeat the accounts of Ilbert Bill, Surendranath's imprisonment, Lord Ripon's fruitless attempts at Reforms and the Calcutta Conference of 1883, and although signs of awakening were visible in all parts of India, Sri Ambica Charan Mazumdar truly said—"Though the Indian National Congress was born in Bombay, its real baptism took place with all formal rites and ceremonies in the following year in the metropolis of the Empire."

Delegates were duly elected this year first, and no stone was left unturned to give a fitting reception to the delegates. Arrangements for food and accommodation were ample.

There was also a great acquisition this year. Mr. Surendranath Banerjee was taken into the fold at the earnest request of Mr. Hume. He gave up his idea for a National Liberal Conference like that of the year 1885 and whole-heartedly joined the Indian National Congress. After this, Surendranath was not

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absent in any session upto that of 1917. He became the undisputed leader of Bengal and a very prominent figure of India.

Raja Rajendralal Mitra, President of the British Indian Association was elected as the Chairman of the Reception Committee and enthusiasm was great. It was from this year a Chairman of the Reception Committee is being elected to be in charge of reception etc. who also addresses the delegates at the start of the session; in Bombay there was no such arrangement.

The famous lawyer-poet Hemchandra's (author of 'Bharat Sangit', 'Bharat Bilap' and 'Britra-Sanhar' 'Rakhi-Bandhan') poem proves the upsurge of national sentiments amongst the intelligentsia in this session of the congress.

Every one knows that Bankimchandra's 'Bande-Mataram' is the national anthem of this Grand National Assembly for over forty years. But even then none could realise the gist of Bandemataram. The contemporaries also did not like it. Being westernised the leaders imitated the foreigners by 'Cheers'. They did not even care to think deeply then. But within a few days so to speak, Bankim heard that his very friend Hemchandra tuning his voice with his and echoing his own, sang with a sonorous voice the poem 'Rakhibandhan' on the occasion of this ceremony—

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Mother India awakens
On the East Bengal, Magadh, Bihar,
Dera Ismail and side of Himalayas
Karachi, Madras, city of Bombay,—
Surat, Gujratis Maharastri brother
All surround the Mother on all sides
Placing palm upon palm in loving embrace
The heart of each has opened
All are of one mind and tune
Sing victory of joy.
With overwhelmed love they clasp
 each other to their hearts,
Sing everybody in sweet voice
Sing—BANDEMATARAM—
“Sujalam, Sufalam, Malayaja Shitalam—
Sashyashyamalam Mataram.
Shubhra-Jyotsna-Pulakita Jamining
Fulla Kushamita Drumadala Shovining
Suhasining Sumadhurobhasining
Sukhadam Baradang Mataram—
Bahubaladharining, Namami Tarining,
Ripudala barining Bande Mataram.”
That voice rose high in city after city
In places of pilgrimage and temples with
 victorious sound
India and the world became inspired.
Joy is flashed in the face
By placing mother on the heart's throne

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Holding her feet every body,
Wears the garland of unity.

The Bengalees were inspired with the poet's song. But even then we used to think and act in the English fashion and used to beg of Englishmen's charities. Now gradually we have come to realize the worthlessness of such a course. We have realised that by begging we shall never get anything. Our agitation is just the other name for begging. India is not England. If you do not get anything in England by asking, you can even assert your rights by show of strength. The Magna Carta of 1215 A.D. is the proof of that strength. The mass sternth got King John to sign at the point of sword "that Great charter of the rights and liberties of people at Runnymede. Again the people rose against Charles I King of England with their demand—'No taxation, without representation' and 'Bill of Rights' was also an outcome of this pressure. But we are helots on our soil and can not earn anything unless we stand on our own legs.

The stages through which this idea of self-help became predominant were worth noting.

Be that as it may, it was at first decided to hold the session in the British Indian Association Hall but as the number of delegates swelled to 426, the place was shifted to the Town-Hall. Dadabhai

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Naoroji was already selected as the President. After the 1885 Congress Session, Dadabhi went to England and was returned as a member of the Liberal Party from Holborn division of Finsbury. He had retired from his career of a professor in a Bombay College and dedicated himself to the political work by going to England and it was his main duty to impress upon Englishmen the real picture of poverty and distress in India. It is doubtful if there was any other person in India more capable at that time than this Parsee Leader to adorn the presidential chair of such a big and representative meeting.

A raised platform was erected on the eastern side of the Town Hall, as otherwise there was no possibility of seeing Dadabhai who was a bit short in stature.

On Monday, the 27th December 1886, Doctor Rajendralal Mitra the great scholar and erudite Orientalist read his opening address by welcoming all the delegates and in the very beginning Rabindranath charmed all by singing the following song :

We have all assembled to-day at the call of Mother
Being of one family, still behaving like foreigners
How long can a brother forsake his brother
So, there he has called him.
That mighty voice makes one overwhelmed
Who can check him any more ?

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Who ever of us remain any where
Are bound to each other by the cords of love
Every one is brought here by that ardent call.

Who does not realise the pangs of his mind ?
Respect or insult—all gone,
Tears in eyes are wiped out.
The heart throbs with new hope
Seeing the brothers side by side.
After persevering for a long time
We have gathered together by numbers,
Just like the children of a family
Go and present yourselves to your mother.

One who had the fortune to witness this Calcutta gathering, would bear witness to the fact that the head-covers of the inhabitants of various places presented an awfully gorgeous spectacle. Such a spectacle is not seen now. The caps of Parsees, those of the Muslims in Bombay and Madras, the pugrees of the Sikhs, the different pugrees of the Maharastriyas and the Madrasis, the variegated pugrees of the Rajputs and the long turbans of the people of Sind contrasted with the bare heads of the Bengalees—presented such a grand spectacle which is unspeakable.

All were different in stature too—the stalwart Sikh, sturdy Pathan, strong Rajput, hardy and steady Maharastriyas, smiling Madrasis and the sharp-eyed

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Parsees and the hearty Bengalees adorned the great Historic Association.

In that Grand Assembly Rajendralal welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Reception Committee as follows :—

“It has been the dream of my life that the scattered units of my race may some day coalesce and come together ; that instead of living merely as individuals we may some day combine as to be able to live as a Nation. In this meeting I behold the commencement of such coalescence, I behold in this Congress the dawn of a better and happier day for India, I look upon the Legislative Councils as the corner stone of all the topics of political condition. Those should therefore be reconstituted. Let our speakers speak moderately. Let our schemes be moderate.”

Rajendralal also said—

“We live not under National Government but under a foreign bureaucracy ; our foreign rulers are foreigners by birth, religion, language and habits—by everything that divides humanity into different sections. They cannot possibly dive into our hearts. They cannot ascertain our wants, our feelings, our aspirations. They may try their best and I have no reason to doubt that many of our Governors have tried hard to ascertain our feelings and our wants,

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but owing to their peculiar position, they have failed to ascertain them”.

Rajendralal was more an intellectual giant than a politician, but he too came out when occasion required. Although deafness in the later years of his life crippled his activities to some extent, he could be found always in philanthropic institutions. He could deliver nicely in a meeting—his lecture was more in the form of a table talk. Now Calcutta Congress under his leadership won special reputation as the meeting place of the representatives of all classes of people—the rich and the middle class, the old and the young, the high and the low.

Raja Joykrishna Mukherjee, Zemindar Uttarpara, proposed Dadabhai Naoroji to the chair and Maharaja Jatindramohon Tagore closed with a vote of thanks to the chair.

Many ‘rediculed’ the Congress as the meeting place of a few dashing youngmen, but an institution with men like Rajendralal, Dadabhai Naoroji, Raja Jaykrishna and Maharaja Jatindramohan and others of the type could hardly be considered the figment of visionary imagination of the youth. Raja Joykrishna was 79, he lost power of sight, still even at such an old age, due to physical illness and incapability he did not hesitate to join the national movement. The President however dwelt more on the bright side of the British rule.

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The President in his opening address laid great stress on the poverty problem of India and urged "that it was right as well as the duty of this Congress to set forth its convictions, both as to this widespread destitution and the primary steps needed for its alleviation." His reasonings were cogent and more so when he clearly defined the scope and functions of the Congress. He pointed out that Congress should deal only with political matters and not social problems which differed in different localities, peculiar to different communities. "A National Congress" he urged "must confine itself to questions in which the entire Nation has a direct participation, and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class-questions to class-Congresses."

— From the second day the Congress met again in the rooms of the British Indian Association, discussions on resolutions took place on 28th, 30th and 31st December 1886.

The Congress this year was a real body of delegates and a large number of about five hundred elected, attended the session. Delegates came as follows :—N. W. Provinces 74. Madras & Bombay 47 each, Punjab 17, Central Provinces & Assam 8 each, and Bengal numbered 230.

It is not a negligible thing to get 406 delegates in Calcutta compared to 72 in Bombay and all of

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them were in the highest social status from the standpoint of learning, wealth and influence. The following resolutions were passed :

1. Address of joyful greetings to Queen Victoria on the coming Jubilee Celebration (1887 A. D.)
2. Arrangements for eradicating poverty.
3. The Reform and Expansion of the Imperial and Local Legislative Councils.
4. Praying for appointment of a Public Service Commission.
5. Enlarging the jury system.
 - (a) Trial by jury in a trial.
 - (b) Verdict of jury to stand in a trial.
6. Separation of the Judicial from the Executive,
7. Proposal to take volunteers from the natives and
8. Promulgation of simultaneous civil service examination both in England and in India and proposal to make the age limit from 19 to 23.

Resolution No. 3 on the Expansion of Legislative Councils was moved amongst others by Babu Kunja Lal Banerjee of Bengal ; and Malek Bhagavan Das of Dehra Ismail Khan said in Urdu on this :—

“I am the delegate from that place where people are more adept in wielding the sword than in handling the pen. Men say that only the Bengali Babu

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are asking for reforms. Am I a Bengalee? Do I look so? All Indians who have got a little common sense, want reform."

On the fourth day discussions were held how the Legislative Councils should be enlarged. Surendra Nath thus said—

"Self government is the ordering of nature, the will of Divine Providence. It is not new to us—our Panchayet system is as old as the hills and is graven on the hearts and the instincts of the people".

Another resolution was passed so that the principle of suffrage may gradually extend to municipalites, District Boards and other allied institutions concerned.

In these discussions Mr. Rahimatulla Siani, Sri Gurudas Banerjee, Kunjalal Banerjee, Keshab Chandra Acharyya Choudhary, Monomohan Ghosh, Kalishankar Shukul, N. G. Chandravarkar, Ananda Charlu, Raja Rampal Singh (Oudh), Dinsha Wacha, Raja Pyari Mohon Mukherjee, Rao Sahib Saminad Iyer, Lala Muralidhar of the Punjab, Lala Kanaiyalal, G. Subrahmanya Iyer, S. Subrahmanya Iyer, Dr. Trailokyanath Mitra, Guruprasad Sen and Syed Sarfuddin of Patna, Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya of Allahabad, Hamid Ali, Nawab Reja Ali of Lucknow etc. took part.

Lala Muralidhar on being recently released on

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bail was present in the Congress. He said about the Jury system—

“I was considered a public agitator because I have my own opinions and speak what I think without fear, and the protection of jury was, therefore, necessary against such abuses”.

Amongst the prominent Muslims of Bengal who did not join in this Session, Nawab Abdul Latif's party and Syed Amir Ali's party deserve special mention. The Nawab Saheb informed in a letter—

“We are fully convinced that the aim of the forthcoming congress is to promote measures which, it is considered, will tend to the amelioration of the condition of the people of India and they would greatly regret to do anything which would have even the appearance of withholding from such a worthy object any support which their co-operation might give.”

All told, 38 Muslim delegates came. Amongst them Mr. Rahimutulla Siani, the famous businessman of Bombay, Raja Ali Khan Nawab of Oudh and Sarfuddin of Behar and other Muslim leaders joined with the Hindus and the Christians on equal terms.

From the Calcutta Session, Provincial Congress Committees were in the process of being formed.

When the Bombay session was over, a few delegates discussed the means and ways as to how to put the 3rd Resolution—the Reform and Expansion of

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of the Imperial and Local Legislative Councils—into effect and the results of discussions were communicated to the provincial leaders. Various suggestions came from many places. Then the resolution was printed in English for 10,000 copies, and over a lakh in different languages and was sent to different places in India. Many copies were circulated in England through the Cobden Club. At the end of each booklet Mr. Hume expressed his opinion in an essay styled as "Old Man's Hope". The diverse opinions that were received formed the subjects of discussion in Calcutta session. The resolution was passed by which election could replace nomination, (*half the members to be elected, one-fourth to be nominated and the rest of the members to be ex-officio*).

In the Calcutta Session the Subjects-Committee was also formed for the first time and although the proposal of Rajendralal was lost on 28. 12. 86, a committee was formed on 24th December with 9 members. Gradually this figure has expanded and now all the members of the All India Congress Committee join the Subjects Committee.

Rajendralal particularly objected to the method in which the resolution regarding "Reforms" was framed in this Subjects Committee. He was against such rapid advance. He even threatened that he would cut off all connection with the Congress if the above resolution was not amended. In his opinion

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how was it possible for the resolutions determined by only nine persons could be a matter for consideration by all ? In the mean time the late Mahesh Chandra Choudhary, well-known Vakil of the Calcutta High Court gave a steamer party as a useful entertainment to the Congress delegates on Wednesday, the 29th December. In this steamer party the resolution on Reforms was again discussed amongst Mr. Hume, Mr. Naoroji, Mr. Ranaday, Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose, Mr. Chandra Madhab Ghose, Gurudas Banerjee and other leaders. Mr. Hume was in favour of a well-constituted scheme, Rajendralal asked to abolish the idea of scheme. He argued why should we invite criticism by putting up schemes ? The resolution was however passed on 30th December after a consideration of several amendments. This subject was again discussed on 31st even the day after the session was over. There was also a little difference of opinion regarding another subject as well. A resolution was passed regarding Public Service Commission in the first session of Congress at Bombay. That commission was formed very quickly in 1886 through the efforts of Lord Dufferin and the Commission set to work that very year. Its President was Sir Charles Turner with members like the Hon'ble Maulvi Abdul Jabber and Mr. Kisch Post-master General etc. Now in the Calcutta session Mr. Naoroji, the president, put up a resolution regarding the Congress reaction

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as to this Commission. Raja Ramlal Singh opined that Congress had nothing to do before the commission gave its final report. Surendranath and Late Kanailal on the other hand suggested that if a Committee was formed then that committee's opinion should be taken as that of the Congress. Mr. Rajendralal Mitra objected, saying "What you are saying ? should the responsibility of a work of such vast body be vested entirely on a small committee ?" Dr. Gurudas Banerjee said that a few witnesses were to be sent from this Congress to the commission. At last it was settled that a Committee should be formed and on the last day of the present session the report of this Committee would be considered.

The Committee reported as follows—

(i) That the Civil Service Examination be held simultaneously in India as well as in England.

(ii) That the age limit should be fixed to 23 instead of to 19.

(iii) Competitive system of examination be promulgated for filling up higher civil appointments.

The report discussed was fully and was accepted at open session of the Calcutta Congress.

The Raja Rampal Sing of whom I have just spoken was a Zemindar of the United Provinces. He could not speak good English, but when he spoke with gesture, that evoked laughter. More over his appearance was a little short. His movements during-

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oration also were another reason for evoking laughter, but with all he made a remarkable speech which contained much of feeling and substance. Thus the National Congress was able from the very beginning to account for adequately and that is why it did not split up like other associations which grow like mushrooms here and there. When the session was over "The Statesman" published an appreciation with regard to the delegates. In the opinion of the Statesman, "the Congress was composed of men of whom we could point with pride, as the out-come of a century of our rule."

On the other hand London Times emitted malice in the following—"It was merely an affair of discontented place-seekers—men of straw with little or no stake in the country—persons of considerable imitative powers, of total ignorance of the real problems of the Government...delegates from all these talking-clubs might become a serious danger to public tranquility."

The members of the Parliament were afraid, as they still are of the Congress. We do not still know what the late Parliamentary and Cabinet Mission really meant.

When the Session was over, a deputation headed by the President and some of the principal delegates waited upon the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, and His Excellency received them cordially and had a

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frank discussion with them not forgetting, at the same time to mention that he received them, though not as Crown Representative, but in his private capacity giving a welcome to the distinguished visitors to the capital. He also received the delegates in a Garden Party. But although the representative power of the congress was not acknowledged by the Representative of the Her Majesty Queen Victoria of India, the country, however, has acknowledged it as the only Representative Organisation of the people consisting of so many communities, creeds and races.

The delegates left happy at the promising position of congress and remembered long the steamer-trip, when vessel glided along the Hooghly decked with flags amidst the cheerings of thousands of joyous spectators on both the banks of the sacred river. While talking amongst themselves on the problems of India.

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THIRD SESSION

The third session of the Congress was held in Madras in 1887 and its President was the famous leader of the Muslim community Sir (then Mr.) Budruddin Tyabji. He was a renowned pleader of the Bombay High Court and later on became also a Judge of the Bombay High Court. We have never met Tyabji but his son Abbas Tyabji was seen in Gaya congress and also at the house of the Deshbandhu Das many times. At that time he was a no-changer.

He also used to bring his daughter along with him. This daughter was a good worker and once courted prison in a Satyagraha campaign. The son Mr. Abbas was also a leader in Rangoon. In this very year 1887 the Jubilee of half a century reign of Queen Victoria came off and it was a matter of great pride to be associated with such an institution at that time. The Jubilee was celebrated with great grandeur in Calcutta and the native leaders co-operated much with the liberal-minded Mr. Harrison the Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation.

Seeing the third session of the Congress, many were of the opinion that the Congress has been

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turned into a Permanent National Organisation. The number of delegates exceeded 600. Three thousand men assembled under a great Pandal in Mackay's garden on the sea beach. The Madrasi equivalent word for stage is called 'pandal'. From the very beginning it was called Pandal and it still remains so. The Pandal at Madras was 130' long and 95' wide. The rent of the garden was about Rs. 250/-.

About 80 delegates from Bengal reserved one boat S.S. Nevassa of B. I. S. N. Co., and set out on a sea voyage and braving through terrible tornado in the Bay of Bengal with fearful hearts reached St. George amidst profound cheers after passing through an ordeal of three days and three nights.

Delegates like Sir Rashbehari Ghosh, Raja Kishorilal Goswami,* Messrs W. C. Bonnerjee, Surendranath Banerjee, Narendranath Sen, Matilal Ghosh, Bepin Chandra Pal, Aswini Kumar Dutt etc. sailed by ship.

While on steamer all of them could discuss political matters and the expenditure was also less. The first class fare by rail journey to and back would have cost Rs. 240/- and Rs. 116/14/- in second class as against Rs. 100/- and Rs. 60/- respectively by the

***Raja Kishorilal** after the passing of the new reforms (1921) was member of the first Executive Council.

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sea. Sir Surendra Nath said in his "Nation in Making" :

"Like Pilgrim Fathers we set out on a sea voyage with a noble purpose ; the sea trip was thoroughly enjoyed by us. Pleasure and business were combined."

On the 22nd Decmber all set out by steamer and reached Madras on 25th.

This time too Nawab Abdul Latif addressed a meeting at Bankipore so that none of his community should join the congress. Inspite of that, many delegates like Moulvi Sarfuddin, Amir Haidar, Tafajal Hossain etc. deserve to be mentioned who were elected in a meeting of the Patna Bar Association. Mr. Sarfuddin afterwards became a puisne judge of the Calcutta High Court.

The late Dewan of Travancore ; Raja Sir T. Madhab Rao K.C.S.I., was passing his retired life in a secluded corner so to speak, but urged by the strong call of service to the mother country he too assumed leadership of the Reception Committee. In his address he requested all to give up sentimental ideas and to take steady steps. He said—

"As a great thinker has said, men learn to run before they learn to walk. They stagger and stumble before they acquire a steady use of their limbs. What is true of individuals is equally true of nations ; and it is uncharitable to form a forecast of the future from

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failings and weaknesses, if any such should exist, incidental to a nascent stage.

“Political liberty and liberal education lend the people to an earnest desire to fraternise and unite. To well-balanced minds such a gathering must appear as the soundest triumph of British administration. Let us trustfully place ourselves under the guidance of the Great Nation and the Great Government which are providentially in charge of our destinies and our future will be as satisfactory as it can possibly be.”

Tyabji was proposed to the chair by the late W. C. Bonnerjee. A few words of Tyabji can possibly prove how he was free from all communal bias. He said :

“There is nothing in the position of the relations of the different communities in India, be they Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsces or Christians which should induce the leader of our community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to reform the Government.”

After the address of the President on 27th December the Subjects selection-committee was formed. For the three days after this (28th, 29th and 30th) the following resolutions were passed. No resolution was however passed regarding the regulation and constitution of the Congress. Certain rules used to be put down on paper and were only read every year. But no organised system was followed. Many

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old leaders like Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee and others hesitated to bind the congress by some rules and regulations. He used to say, "There was no constitution of the Parliament of such a vast British Empire, then why should we bother our heads over it" ? But one day this caused much repentance. The abrupt breaking up of the Congress Session in Surat in 1907 A.D. has been more or less attributed this slackness.

To refresh reader's memory let me add that Lord Macaulay once said (1832) "the noblest monument of British Rule in India would be the establishment of Britain's free institutions in the land".

Sir T. Madhab Rao too citing Lord Macaulay said :

"England has taken us in to her bosom and claims us as her own. We appeal to her by the sweetest, the gentlest, the tenderest and yet withal by the most durable of all ties which binds mother to her off springs to confer upon us the inestimable boon of Representative Institutions, and I am sure we shall not appeal in vain".

Mr. Eardley Norton, Pandit Bishan Narain Dar, W. S. Grant discussed about this. Mr. Norton's lecture was very impressive. He advised the Indians to stick to the cause of reform like leech. Mr. Norton was then a Barrister at Madras.

Men like Messrs M. Subrahmayan, W. C. Bannerjee, Kalisankar Bannerjee, Narendranath Sen, Shaligram Singha, Shankar Nair, Guruprasad Sen,



Sir Budruddin Tyabji
President Indian National Congress
Third Session (1887)

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Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Chandra Bharkar, Khare, Moulvi Hamid Ali, Raja Rampal Singh, S. Agnihotri, Bipin Chandra Pal, Trailakshyanath Mitra, Mr. John Adams, Mr. B. H. Chastu, M.A., Mr. Hume etc. who thought much of the country joined the discussions.

There was a heated debate over abolition of Arms Act. Bepin Chandra Pal, Surendranath etc. and others argued very forcibly on the abolition of the Arms Act. The famous lawyer Mr. Trailakshyanath Mitra put up a resolution for amendment of the Arms Act to the effect that every individual should be able to use arms on obtaining permission from the Local or Municipal authorities instead of its total abolition. Mr. Hume was feeling very uneasy during the whole course of the debate, because he was thinking that this institution might not incur displeasure of Lord Dufferin by passing resolutions on such dangerous matters. A resolution was also passed that a full copy of the minutes of the meeting should be sent to Government of India and to the Secretary of State for India.

All may know that Arms Act and Press Act were promulgated by Lord Lytton. Lord Ripon abolished the first but the second remained.

Lord Connermara, Governor of Madras was inclined to be present in that session but Lord Dufferin advised him that instead of his being present

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there, it would be better if he invited the delegates to a dinner party.

For the above reason not only the Governor was present at the big dinner party given by Mr. Norton, in honour of the Congress-delegates, but he also invited all of them to the Government House the next evening and was all attention to the guests. His relationship with them was most cordial. A heavy tiffin was arranged for, special arrangements were made to give pleasure to the delegates, and Governor's Band welcomed them with a musical entertainment.

Everybody was satisfied at the generous behaviour of Mr. Norton at Madras. Afterwards Mr. Norton came and practised at the Calcutta High Court and earned much money. He appeared for the prosecution on a daily fee of Rs. 1000/- for a long time in that famous Alipore Conspiracy Case in 1908 in which Sri Arabinda, Barindra etc. were implicated. He argued the Sessions Judge Mr. Beachcraft and also in the High Court before the Chief Justice Sir Lawrence Jenkins, while his opponent was late (Deshabandhu) Chittaranjan Das. Afterwards the way in which he conducted the case of Nirmal Kanta Roy with great sincerity and selfless perseverance that he won the admiration of all. This time too Chittaranjan was with him. Even after this he defended two Hindu youths in Chandernagore shooting case and

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got them acquitted. He had a good many admirers in Bengal.

There arose a great misgiving amongst the delegates of Bengal who attended the Madras Session of the Congress regarding the Arms Act. The following letter from a spectator appeared in the columns of a famous monthly, "Navajivan". (1294 B. S.) As this letter unfolds another side of the picture, we reproduce below for the information of our readers :—

I had continuous gaze over the face of Mr. Hume for three days. From here I heard that he was more a god than a man; in actuality of course my love for him has not diminished but it did not rouse any respect for him either. It is no mean credit to him who is a friend of India and is standing against his own countrymen for the sake of India. Mr. Hume's discomfiture expressed itself in degrees and to climax when he literally began to run from post to pillar as soon as the trouble arose over the resolution i.e. abolition of Arms Act, his extreme unwillingness and his gestures in certain other minor details conclusively proved that Mr. Hume not only thinks good of India selflessly but he has a keen eye towards the interests of his own race too. Possibly he was very keen in establishing a link between the interests of his countrymen with those of the nascent movement here. Meseemed, it is the Congress which is an attempt at establishing such link. India may be benefited by it; but to be frank, mine is a mixed feeling of hope and apprehension. That by this new

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type of link the interests of both the nations having been roped together will gradually eventuate into a single entity or alternatively this nascent life will be completely uprooted from the soft soil of this land on being pulled by such link by the manoeuvring of diplomatic policy of some shrewd politician—a fish of deep waters. Furthermore, I have come to the conclusion that the Congress will soon be the abode of insincerity as prevalent amongst the members of the Parliament instead of turning out to be a Parliament. This time a Madras gentleman rose to the platform to say something at the time when Income tax resolution was debated. Unfortunately he was lame. When he limped his way to the platform many delegates clapped their hands from all sides. I cannot explain my pain and disgust which I felt at that unmannerly and ugly sight much in the way as loud sounds and claps are witnessed from the eight anna ticket-holders of the audience owing to any lach in a theatrical performance. What should I say more of the childish demeanour of the representatives of our country who have assembled in a place to turn India's destiny? In one word, many went to the Congress more for fun. Those who are powerful have gone to increase their power. Some of them were also on the look out for increasing the number of subscribers to their journals by catching hold of this opportunity. There were really selfless men and patriots too. But most of them were briefless young pleaders and Press representatives and a few like me, devoid of proper education but having been admitted to its light. Young descendents of zamindars, and some precocious patriots gathering together did not allow the eminent people to speak anything, slighting their good counsel, clapping hands every time although

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not required, have any how performed the affairs of the Congress this year. If you desire to derive some benefit from the Congress, if you wish to make it permanent—it is absolutely essential for men like ..to enter into it. Everything will be set at nought if attempts are made to construct congress with brilliant speakers only, instead of with men of action”.

Publicity was not lacking before the Madras session commenced and a novel way to raise subscriptions was implemented. Due to publicity many persons contributed their mite. Even from ordinary men one anna was also collected and from the chiefs of states (Travancore, Mysore, Cochin etc.) even Rs. 500/- were received. The famous Veer Raghavacharia laboured hard for the Fund.

A great commotion was noticed in the meeting regarding a resolution. Raja Sashisekhareswar Roy of Tahirpur (Bengal) was an orthodox Hindu. All on a sudden he gave notice of a resolution that slaughter of cows should be stopped. As already stated Sir Syed Ahmad etc. was disagreeable at that time to join the Congress, doubting it to be a Hindu Organisation. Moreover if this resolution were passed, freedom of a particular community would have been curtailed. That is why the leaders ruled that if any resolution was contrary to interests of a particular community and harmful to it, then on the disagreement of the representatives of that community

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—even though the community is a minority—no resolution should be passed.

Mr. Norton's address every body heard with interest, and he too delivered it fearlessly. We are quoting an extract of his address here—

“I was told yesterday by one for whose character and educated qualities I cherish a great esteem, that in joining myself with the labourers in the Congress, I have earned for myself the new title of a ‘veiled seditionist’, If it be sedition, gentlemen, to rebel against all wrong, if it be sedition to insist that the people should have a fair share in the administration of their own country, and affairs, if it be sedition to resist tyranny to raise my voice against oppression, to mutiny against injustice to insist upon a hearing before sentence, to uphold the liberties of the individual, to vindicate our common right to gradual but ever-advancing reform—if this be sedition, I am right glad to be called a ‘seditionist’ and doubly, aye, trebly glad, when I look, around me to-day, to know and feel I am ranked as one amongst such a magnificent array of ‘seditionists’.

This address was delivered more than half a century ago, but expression even of a fractional idea of this to-day means sedition. To term Government's administration as tyranny and injustice is rank sedition to-day, and even Mr. Norton himself could not have got his client acquitted from the clutches of

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law for using such language. But the astute advocate Mr Norton knew what he was saying was right.

The leader and ideal worker of Barisal—Sree Aswini Kumar Dutt while supporting Surendranath and Mr. Norton on the “Expansion of Indian and Provincial Legislative Councils” spoke—

“To-day I have brought for your consideration an appeal signed by 45000 men. When they signed the document I was overwhelmed with joy at their energy and enthusiasm. A so-called untouchable came and said “Sir, our own men will make laws ! What a great luck it is !” A very poor Mussalman gave me four annas and requested me to utilise it in our work. Another peasant discussed with his neighbour—Look, as we conduct the Panchayet system and accept the decision of the Panchayet, so our men will make laws and we too shall be pleased to abide by them. Please see, gentlemen, how the mass is anxious about this matter”.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Besides the Governor and Mr. Norton, the Sheriff of Madras also invited the delegates to a dinner party.

The session was a great success all round and the whole atmosphere was friendly and promising.

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FOURTH SESSION

Government showed much sympathy with the Congress in its Bombay, Calcutta and Madras Sessions of three consecutive years. But its attitude took an opposite turn from the fourth session. From the very inception of the Congress, 'Englishman' and 'Pioneer', the two Anglo Indian dailies began to hurl malicious invectives in their editorials against it. They also made much ado about the word 'Nation' used by the Congress. The white civilians employed in India were all along against the Congress and are so, even up to this time ; and although the Governors of Bombay and Madras and the Governor General of India (all three chosen by the Parliament) wished its success, the civilian Lt. Governor of Allahabad, Sir Auckland Colvin, was firmly determined to stand against it this time. Hearing that the session will be held at Allahabad, he cast an aspersion on it at the very first Durbar investiture ceremony in the following words :

"You should fix your attention on matters falling within the legitimate scope of your action and not waste it in the discussion of more ambitious schemes the carrying out of which requires that collective ac-

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tion and that practical handling of affairs which is the result of a long and laborious training in the conduct of public on yourselves”.

Mr. Colvin not only held such adverse opinion but on the eve of the Congress Session he issued a circular prohibiting all Government servants to join this political meeting. Further when the session was in progress, Mr. Colvin left Allahabad for mufussil tour.

Not only that, the Reception Committee had to suffer great inconvenience for securing a site for the Congress Session. Firstly, the famous advocate Pandit Ajodhyanath and his fellow workers tried to convene the session at Khasru Bagh at Allahabad. But the Government objected to it ; so an attempt was made to hold the meeting near the Fort by taking a few rooms and some plot of open land. But the Government even protested against it on the ground of sanitation for the neighbours and pilgrims and also returned the advance money formerly accepted. The promoters were not at all discouraged at this, but tried to pitch the tent near the Cantonment near the Pioneer office (Nababivakar terms “Pioneer” as ‘Manasadevi of Prayagdhham’).. But here also an objection was raised on the plea of sanitation. Then Ajodhyanath hit upon a stratagem, which was required by the circumstances.

A certain Nawab of Lucknow had a big house

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named Lowther Castle. At the very beginning, Ajodhyanath had advanced money by taking it on lease and took virtual possession of it long before the Congress Session. There was trouble regarding this house as well but it was ineffective. Seeing the house good, Sir Lakshmiswar Sing Bahadoor, the Maharaja of Darbhanga, bought it after some time and kept it for use by the Congress. There was no further trouble regarding Congress site at Allahabad due to patriotism and generosity of the Maharaja Bahadoor. The place too was also near the Alfred Park and the neighbouring houses were far apart ; there was thus no ground for any objection what-so-ever.

This time the number delegates was 1248, double of what was in the last year (1887) and amongst them Muslims numbered 221*, Christians 220, Sikhs 6, Jain 11, Parsi 7, and the rest were Hindus.

In convening the Congress the enthusiasm of the public was increasing daily. This is one of the best reasons for the Congress success this year. It is however regrettable that the very Lord Dufferin, under whose advice the Congress was established before,

* We were straining every nerve to secure the co-operation of our Mahommeden fellow countrymen in this great national work. We sometimes paid the fare of Mahommeden delegates and offered them other facilities".

Surendra Nath's 'Nation in Making' (Page 108).

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had taken now a different view. On the eve of his departure, the white men of Calcutta were assembled in the Town Hall on the occasion of St. Andrew's dinner on the 30th November, 1888. Sir Alexander Wilson a British merchant in his farewell address said :

"The day may come when further political privileges may be granted to those who, holding a stake in the country, have shown themselves fit to exercise them ; but though much has been done to bring the theory of Local Self-Government within a workable adaptation of means to ends, there is much more to be achieved before it can be pronounced a success in this country (Cheers).

"Even it this age of progress there is such a thing as going too fast and the country owes much to our noble guest here to-night for having moderated the pace". (Renewed Cheers)".

Many other complicated problems were also raised at the meeting and everyone was anxious to know the views of Lord Dufferin. Lord Dufferin too made a long speech it course of which amongst other things he said :

"Now gentlemen, some intelligent, loyal, patriotic and well-meaning men are desirous of taking, I will not say a further step in advance, but a very big jump into the unknown by the application to India of democratic methods of government and the adoption of a parliamentary system which England herself has only reached by slow degrees

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and through the discipline of many centuries of preparations.*

"They want that the Government should be democratic, the bureaucracy should be subservient and they should have control over public exchequer and gradually the British authorities should also be supplicating to them. Their next step is that only Indian soldiers should be appointed for the country's defence and the British Army should be reduced to half.

"I would ask them how could any reasonable man imagine that the British Government would be content to allow 'this microscopic minority' to control their administration of that Majestic and multiform empire for whose safety and welfare they are responsible in the eyes of God and before the eyes of civilization. It has been stated that this minority represents a large and growing class and I feel very sure that as the time goes on, it is not only the class that will grow but the information and experience of its members. At present, however, it appears to me a groundless contention, that it represents the people of India. If they have been the real representatives of the people of India, that is to say, of the voiceless millions instead of seeking to circumscribe the incidence of the Income tax as they desired to do, they would have received a mandate to decuple it (laughter). Indeed it is not evident that large sections of the community are already becoming alarmed at the thought of 'such self constituted bodies' interposing between themselves and the august impartiality of English rule. These persons ought to know that in the

Vide Englishman, Dec. 1, 1888.

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present condition of India, there can be no effective representation of the people with their enormous number, their multifarious interest and their tasselated nationalities”.

The reader may please mark the three words : “leap in the dark”, “microscopic minority” and “self-constituted bodies”. An agitation was raised from all sides centering on these three words.

‘The Englishman’ remarked regarding this address as ‘merciless logic’ and Lord Sump of England supported His Excellency. Of course, Mr. Hume gave a forcible reply as there were one or two words referring to him too.

“Englishman” did not even spare Mr. Hume and ridiculed him as Guy Fawkes, Seditious etc. It continued : “Mr. Hume’s occupation is to foment race-animosity and to use the ignorant credulous and aspiring native as a weapon with which to harrass the Government whose pay he still continues to draw.”

Mr. Bradlaugh was much displeased in going through the addresss of Lord Dufferin in London Times, and immediately in replied to it a meeting at New Castle. Lord Dufferin on reaching England saw this and wrote to Mr. Bradlaugh, offering an apology that he had not misrepresented the Congress. He neither directly nor by implication suggested that the Congress was seditious, and that he always spoke of the Congress in terms of sympathy and respect

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and treated its members with great personal civility. That he was always in favour of Civil Service Commission and that he himself was in favour of such a reform of the Provincial Councils in India as he (Mr. Bradlaugh) appeared to advocate.

Charles Bradlaugh's sympathy for India is highly commendable. I have already dealt with his brilliant address regarding Ilbert Bill, and in 1888 he put forward a resolution in the Parliament. He suggested that a commission including natives be appointed to enquire into the administration of India with power to take evidence both in India and in England. In support Lord Dufferin wrote to Mr. Bradlaugh in another letter: "I think our efforts should be applied rather to the decentralisation of our Indian administration than its greater unification and I made considerable effort in India to promote and expand this principle. In any event, I am sure the discussion which you will have provoked will prove very useful and I am very glad that the conduct of it should be in the hand of a prudent, wise and responsible person like yourself, instead of having been laid hold of by some adventurous franc-tireur whose only object might possibly have been to let off a few fire-works for his own glorification".

But it actually did not happen. The greater opponent to this was another member of Parliament, Mr. J. M. Maclean. He deprecated the appoint-

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ment on the ground that it would tend to plunge India into prolonged and incessant agitation. We shall deal later on how Chittaranjan Das set at nought the election of Mr. Maclean in 1891 by arguing against his unjust remarks. In India however, a great agitation was started amongst the intelligentsia at the uncharitable remarks of Lord Dufferin viz. 'Microscopic Minority', 'Leap in the dark' and 'self-constituted bodies' and it also tended to increase their support to the Congress. Much harm was done to the Congress, through 2 famous men of North West Provinces going against it. One was Sir Syed Ahmed, founder of Aligarh College and another Raja Sivaprosad, a Zaminder of Benares.

Controversy was going on through correspondence between Sir Auckland Colvin and Mr. Hume. Sir Auckland attacked the Congress, whereas Mr. Hume supported it.

In this 4th Session Mr. G. Yule, President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, took the chair and put his proposals very ably regarding reform of Legislative Councils. Pertinent resolutions were put up. The liberal members of the British Parliament, of course, viewed the Congress with sympathy. Mr. John Bright was then indisposed. His son telegraphically informed Mr. G. Yule: "Father better, thanks Congress warmly". But the conservatives as ever were against Indian aspirations.

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Shortly before this, the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury went so far as to refer to our grand old man of India as nothing but a 'black man'. It rose thus.

In 1886 Mr. Naoroji was a candidate from Holborn Division of Finsbury but could not be returned. Again in 1888 on the eve of 1892 elections, as Mr. Naoroji expressed his resolve to stand a rival candidate for Central Finsbury, the words "blackman of India" came out of Lord Salisbury's. Mr. Gladstone took him much to task for this. The Prime Minister denied that the use of the term 'Black-Man'* was a contemptuous denunciation of the people of India-however he expressed regret and said: "It fell from him in the excitement of the moment".

The following resolutions were carried out balance only in the 4th Session of the Congress :

1. Reform of Legislative Council.
2. Discussion of Public Service Commission's Report.
3. Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions.

* It was undoubtedly a smaller majority Colonel Dunham obtained, but then Colonel Dunham was opposed by a blackman; and however much the progress of mankind has advanced in overcoming prejudices, I doubt if we have yet got to that point of view where a British Constituency elect a 'blackman'. (Lord Salisbury's speech).

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4. Discussions on jury system and its scope.
5. Prayer for appointing a Commission for Police Reforms.
6. Reform of Excoise regulations.
7. Prayer for Income Tax on an income of Rs. 1000/- per year.
8. Prayer for increase of expenditure for Education.
9. Prayer for appointing Commission on Industrial Survey.
10. Proposal for decreasing Salt Tax.

Due to Lord Dufferin's endeavour a Royal Commission was appointed in 1887. It was the intention of the Commission how to achieve improvement with regard to service conditions by taking evidence. Sir Charles Turner was Chairman of this Commission. This Commission finished its work after almost a year and report was made. The second resolution* was on the basis of this report. In this Commission the age for Civil Service was increased from 19 to 23 and the report was made to the effect that nothing should be made to stop the promulgation of holding examinations both in England and in India.

That is why this time the resolution was made by the Congress that arrangment should be made to hold examinations in both the places. Mr. John

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Adam of Madras sought to amend the resolution and said that even though examinations were held in this country, one should, as a matter of fact, finish his education in England for sometime. The famous Motilal Ghosh of Bengal was too disheartened and tried very much so that the resolution was not carried out. He was afraid lest many orthodox Hindus would clear out from the Congress fold. At last the following resolution was carried.

"Congress appreciated the concessions proposed by the Public Service Commission but stated that full justice would never be done to the people of the country until open competitions for the Indian Civil Service were held simultaneously in England and in India".

In this Session severe protest was made against the words contained in Lord Dufferin's address. Surendranath said : "Mr. Gladstone the great, was a supporter of the Congress, then what was the reason of Lord Dufferin's opposition to it?"

At this meeting Raja Sivaprosad was present as delegate. At this, many objected because his

Mr. Gladstone had replied to the question of a certain Mahommedan :

"It will not do for us to treat with contempt or even indifference the rising aspirations of this Great People".

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anti-national views were not unknown to anybody. But he was made to sit near the President far away from the delegates. During the resolution for Council Reform and in the midst of discussion of Lord Dufferin's remarks, the Raja Sivaprosad raised a very strange resolution. The resolution was proved afterwards as prayer to the Government to stop seditious speeches. All the delegates and spectators were so much agitated that arrangements were made with great difficulty for the Raja Sivaprosad to reach his house safely.

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BRADLAUGH SESSION (1889)

The Fifth Session of the Congress was held in Bombay in 1889 and Sir William Wedderburn was elected as President. The greatest attraction of the Congress this year was the arrival of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, Member of Parliament, in India and joining the Congress Session. Sir Pherozshah Mehta became the Chairman of the Reception Committee.

Although Charles Bradlaugh was an atheist in principle he devoted himself to philanthropic work. He was very keen like Henry Fawcett and John Bright for reforms in Indian administration. He loved India so much and displayed such eagerness to press his views on behalf of India in the Parliament that he was styled in the Commons "as Member for India."

Mrs. Annie Besant was his fellow worker and both together did many philanthropic works on many occasions. Both preached "*Malthus*" so that population might not increase. They received opposition in the Christian countries as it was against the canons of religion, but in the Court they won their case. After the death of Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant too tried much to do good to India.

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As Bradlough was an atheist he even denied to take oath in Parliament in the name of God. For this although he was not allowed to enter Parliament at first, but the latter gave in at last allowing him to take oath in his own words.

At this time he was preparing a Bill to be presented before the Parliament regarding reform of administration in India to India's benefit, but in order to have a first hand information of the views of the national leaders of this country, he came to India and was present in the Congress Session to understand and feel what was the real state of affairs here. He would have started on 14th November, 1889, but due to illness he started two weeks later. His love for India even when he was indisposed was really commendable. Coming to Bombay he was not only present in the Congress Session, but he discussed with all the principal personalities of each province and understood their views. General enthusiasm prevailed so much in this historic conference that the session itself was named "Bradlough Session".

As soon as he returned to England he presented an "India Council Bill" before the Parliament.

The number of delegates increased very considerably in this session as follows :

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From Bengal (Bihar, Orissa and Assam included)	165
Madras	366
Bombay and Sind	821
Punjab	62
North Western Province and Oudh	261
Central Provinces and Berar	214
Total	1889

In the first session only 38 delegates from Bombay were present, this time the number swelled to 821. At the first session only two Muslim delegates were present, but this time the number increased to 258. That the Congress was growing in importance is manifest in this fact. The Governor of Bombay unlike Mr. Colvin was not at daggers drawn with the Congress. As a result, many Government servants were secretly or in disguise present in the Congress session to see Mr. Bradlaugh and to hear him. Really with the presence of Bradlaugh much hope, enthusiasm and keenness were generated.

The president Sir William Wedderburn gave a very interesting account of the history of the British rule. He said—

“With the withdrawal of all the safeguards that were in vogue during the Company regime, the distress of Indians has rather increased. There is no

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end to Indian's sufferings from the very day (1858) the Government was transferred from the Company to the Crown. Formerly the Company cared much for the Parliament but whom does the Government care now ? For instance, Lord Ripon formulated a scheme for establishment of agricultural Bank, whereas India office annulled it. Let me ask, without an agricultural Bank what improvement the agriculturists can make by falling preys in the hands of creditors ? If this is not in existence, there is no possibility what-so-ever for the agriculturists to bring home their harvest. Please have a look at the condition of Germany—only in that country 2000 agricultural Banks are functioning.”

He then enlivened all those present by eulogising the Congress, by expressing gratitude to friends of India like Mr. William Digby etc. Who were trying their best for doing good to India and by entertaining the hope that Congress would be able to win the sympathy of all the inhabitants of England in no time.

This time two new Maharastra leaders joined the Congress. One was Mr. Gopalkrishna Gokhale and another Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mr. Gokhale was a leading member of the High Command of the Congress of his time and in the matter of debate whether in Indian or in Provincial Council—he was unique, and Tilak Maharaj earned for himself at

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one time the reputation of being an undisputed leader of the Nationalist party of the Congress.

The main resolution of this session was Expansion of Reform of Councils*. A great agitation sprang up during the debate of this resolution—"That the following skeleton scheme for the reform and reconstitution of the Council of the Governor General for making laws and regulations and the Provincial Legislative Councils is adopted and that the President of the Congress do submit Charles Bradlaugh Esq. M. P. with the respectful request of this Congress that he may be pleased to cause a Bill to be drafted on the lines indicated in this skeleton scheme and introduce the same in the British House of Commons :—

- (a) The Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils to consist respectively of member, not less than on-half of whom are to be elected, not more than one-fourth to sit ex-officio and the rest to be nominated by Government.
- (b) Revenue districts to constitute ordinarily territorial units for electoral purposes.

* I am quoting below the whole resolution to explain what the resolution of 1889 was and why arguments occurred with reference to the constitution.

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- (c) All male British subjects above 21 years of age possessing certain qualifications to be voters.
- (d) Voters in each district to elect representatives to one or more electoral bodies.
- (e) All the representatives thus elected by all the districts, included in the jurisdiction of each electoral body, to elect members to the Imperial legislature at the rate of per every five million of the total populations of the electoral jurisdiction and to their own Provincial Legislature at the rate of 1 per million of said total population, in such wise that whenever the Parsees, Christians, Mahommedans or Hindus are in a minority, the total member of Parsees Christian Mahommedans or Hindus, as the case may be, elected to the Provincial Legislature, shall not, so far as way lie possible, bear a less proportion to the total number of members elected there to, than the total number of Parsees, Christian, Hindus or Mahommedans, as the case may be in such electoral jurisdiction bear to the total proportion. Members of both Legislatures to possess certain qualifications and not to be subject to certain disqualifications, both of which will be settled later."

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Thus a Bill was to be presented before the Parliament on the above lines, and the President, Sir William Wedderburn, himself handed over the above resolution of the Congress to Mr. Charles Bradlaugh.'

There was a speck of cloud even in the political horizon sometime. But it did not rain the cloud vanished soon. It was Mr. Eardly Norton who raised the above resolution. He explained in detail on what qualifications men are eligible to vote. Pandit Ajodhyanath seconded it. Mr. Hume was in favour of omitting the "minority clause". *He said "Indians were Indians. Why there should be majority ? or minority ?"* But many did not support him. But the cloud began together when Munshi Hedayet Rasul of Oudh sought an amendment saying that although the Hindu population was a majority, the numbers of Hindu and Muslim members in a Council should be equal.

Mr. Hamidali Khan, Bar-at-Law Lucknow opposed it saying no such question as Hindus or Mahommedans should be raised.

Syed Wajed Ali Biwaji said in rather an excited tone "the number of Muslim members in the Council should be thrice that of Hindus".

Syed Miruddin Ahmed Balkhi opposing these amendments made a very neat speech. He said "We have assembled here for one common object. On such

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an occasion the Mahommedans cannot call themselves Mohammedans ; nor Hindus, Hindus but rather forgetting all differences on creed, caste and colour, *we should call ourselves Indians ?*"

When the amendment to the resolution of Hidayet Rasul came up before the house, even the Mussalman voted against it. Then Mr. Norton's resolution was carried out unanimously.

More than half a century before even though a little communal cloud gathered, it disappeared very quickly ; but to day heaps of communal cloud have spread all over the political horizon of India. These too will disappear soon, it is hoped, through the grace of God.

When debate went on this minority question, the late Dwarkanath Ganguly, delegate from Bengal, sought an amendment to the resolution asking for conferring voting rights upon women. He was editor of a weekly organ "Lalana Suhrit" or "Friend of Women" and tried much for the upliftment of women. His song runs thus :

"If the Indian women do not awake,
This India will also not awake".

Mr. Dwarakanath Ganguly was a great social worker and was the husband of Doctor Kadambini Ganguly. She and Chandramukhi Basu were the first amongst women who passed the B.A. examination.

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Mr. Ganguly's amendment was withdrawn eventually. For the first time some women delegates attended this session. Amongst them Mrs. (Doctor) Ganguly was also present. In the Legislative Assembly to-day there are many women members.

On the third day the work of the Congress was finished for that year. At 5 P.M. Mr. Bradlaugh was given an address. Many institutions and also many others in private capacity brought addresses of welcome for him. At last it was decided that only the Congress should offer an address and others will be taken as read.

Mr. Bradlaugh replied very warmly to the address :

"You have made me feel since I have been in Bombay that the word "Home" has a wider significance than I had given it. I have learned that if I have only a little house I have a larger one in your sympathies and in your affection and I trust to reserve my future work in your love."

In the address it was written that it was only for the benefit of the mass that Mr. Bradlaugh had staked his life. He replied :

"For whom should I work if not for the people ?

Born of the people, trusted by the people, I will die for the people".

Actually he had rather an untimely end and that too was on the eve of his doing good to India. He also said that the Congress should not expect

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much at this stage. He advised in this regard as follows :

“In England great reforms have always been slowly won. Those who first enterprised them were called seditious and sometimes sent to jails as criminals, but speech and thought live on. No imprisonment can crush a truth, it may hinder it for the moment, it may delay it for an hour, but it gets an electric elasticity inside the dungeon walls and it grows, and moves the whole world when it comes out”.

He also discussed about what Congress had done so far and said :

“You have shown me that you can meet and discuss differences as you have done and that you are worthy of public trust and the right of electing and being elected to help to make the laws which you so discuss”.

He asked to “send petitions to Parliament signed by thousands, by hundreds of thousands, by millions if possible, to obtain the desired result.

“I am here because I believe you are loyal to the law which I am bound to support. I am here because I believe you much as we in England have done to win within the limits of the constitution, the most perfect equality and right for all.”

“I believe that in the Congress I see the germs of

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that which may be as fruitful, as the most hopeful tree that grows under your sun.

"Even if I do not always plead with the voice that you would speak with, you will believe that I have done my best and that I meant my best to the greater happiness for India's people, greater peace for Britain's rule and greatest comfort for the whole of Britain's subjects."

He dwelt at length with delegates from Bengal like Surendranath, Matilal Ghosh etc. regarding the condition of Bengal.

There was no doubt that the business of this conference was conducted to a successful conclusion through the steadiness of Sir William Wedderburn. Mr. Ananda Charlu of Madras expressed delight in a resolution on this.

Due to this agitation "India" became the official organ of the Congress in England and its responsibility was entrusted to Mr. William Digby.

Mr. John Adam brought the resolution regarding the Arms Act. A resolution was made to the effect that license to bear and possess arms shall be liberally and generally distributed whenever wild animals habitually destroy human life &c." The resolution was carried.

During the course of this resolution, the Muslim delegates who spoke incoherently on the previous day,

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admitted their error and promised to abide by the majority decision. The cloud was dispelled.

Mr. Hume was again appointed as General Secretary for the coming year and Pandit Ajodhyanath became the Joint Secretary. A resolution was also carried to the effect that the number of delegates, should not exceed one thousand.

A sum of Rs. 1500/- was also sanctioned for the following men to go to England and explain the condition prevalent here in proper perspective and also to acquaint the members of the parliament with adequate information of India. Appeals were made in that conference for raising this money. In the very beginning Lala Muralidhar inaugurated an auspicious start by placing Rs. 555/- cash on the table. Then there was much enthusiasm and Surendranath fanned it so much that in that very conference, coins like rupee, pice, half rupee, two anna bits came in torrents from all sides, as it were. Surendrath's address made a deep impression in the mind of Mr. Bradlaugh and he returned to his country with satisfaction. Promises were received in the meeting to the extent of Rs. 46000/- out of which Rs. 9179/9/7 were collected on the spot. Messrs Umesh Chandra Bonnerjee, R. N. Mudhalkar, Surendranath Banerjee Eardly Norton and Hume were nominated as members of the Deputation.

No sooner he set his foot on England Mr.

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Charles Bradlaugh brought a Bill before the House of Commons. The main purport of this Bill was that in no time half the number of the Legislative Councils should be elected and that number of members on the Promincial as well as on the Imperial Councils should be increased. But illness and lapse of time stood in the way. Bradlaugh was laid up in bed in fatal illness very soon and left this world on 30th January, 1891. The First reading of the Bill was finished during his illness and it was hurried through on 26th January at the instance of Sir John Gorst belonging to the opposite party. The removal of this Bill became indispensable after his death specially in the beginning of 1890. In the mean time Lord Cross, Secretary of State for India, brought a Bill before the House of Lords and before this, two readings on this Bill had at ready been completed and that only stood now.

There was very great agitation in England regarding Indian affairs in 1890, 1891 and 1892 on account of the India Bill and also on account of many questions cropping out of Election Fight.

We have mentioned about the formation of a Deputation in the Bombay Session of 1889, this very deputation began its work at first from Mr. Naoroji's Finsbury centre. After working for 4/5 months the deputationists left England in the month of June. Many reached Bombay again on 6th July, 1890.

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The lectures generally centred round representative procedure and representative institutions. There was indeed a great agitation in England regarding Indian affairs relating to events between 1890 and 1892. Towards the end of 1892, the Bill was made a Law. The Indian Councils Act of 1892.

To understand the real History of the Congress, we shall have to consider the conditions of England along with those of India for these three years (1890-1892). I would thus discuss in the next Chapter in detail about two subjects mainly (1) Reforms—its origin and gradual development and (2) Agitation in England regarding India, and shall also describe other matters concerning the following Sessions of the Company.

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INDIAN COUNCILS ACT OF 1892

6th to 12th Sessions of Congress

I A SHORT HISTORY OF REFORMS.

Until the Regulating Act was passed by Parliamentary intervention in 1773, every thing was done by * Company's servants. Governors (Drake, Olive, Vansittart and Hastings) did everything in the name of the Company and after the passing away of Nawab Serajuddulla, the word 'Nawab' consisted only in flattery to the British. Mirkasim wanted to be the real 'Nawab' † instead of being a puppet and that

* The East India Company formed by some London merchants to trade in East Indies was granted a Charter by Queen Elizabeth in 1600 A.D. In return a share of the profits used to be given to the Crown. This Company gradually became powerful in India and their Settlements in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were governed by a Governor or President with the help of a Council responsible to the Directors of the Company at home.

List of Nawabs.

1757—Sirajuddula.

1757-1760—Mirjafar.

1760-1763—Mirkasim.

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brought about his ruin. The rise and fall of the subsequent Nawabs fetched only huge monetary profits to the Company's servants and with the grant of Dewani in 1765, peoples' woes multiplied. After this, Nawab remained in charge of 'Law and Order' which he was supposed to administer with the help of two deputy Subedars (One at Bengal and another at Behar) and Revenue was being collected by the British. As to how this dual system wrought havoc in Bengal we get a vivid picture reflected in Bankim Chandra's *Anandamath* :—

"In the Bengali year 1176 (1769A.D.), the Province of Bengal was not under British Administration. The English were then in charge of Dewani. They collected revenue but did not then take charge of protecting lives and properties of the people of Bengal. Their responsibility consisted in collecting money and the responsibility of protecting lives and properties rested with the worthless Nawabs. The

N. B. Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong were however ceded to the East India Company by Mirkashim when he became the Nawab of Bengal.

1763-1762—Mirjafar.

1765—Nazimuddin—The English secured Dewani.

1766-1770—Safauddalah and Mubarrkdaulla—Obtaining pension made over the administration also to be East India Co. The last three are sons Nawab Mirjafar.

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Nawab was unable to defend himself, and how could he defend Bengal ?

“The British, of course, appointed collectors in place where dues were to be collected and the money realised used to be sent to Calcutta. Whether men died or lived mattered little with them. Their business was to realise money and that went on unceasingly”.

On the one hand stories of famine, anarchy and oppression reached the ears of many reasonable and upright men of England, on the other arrogant servants of the company returned home with vast riches. Thus the British Parliament at last resolved to intervene. At such a crisis, the Regulating Act of 1773 was promulgated by Lord North, Prime Minister of King George III. Its provisions are :—

(1) Governor of Bengal was henceforth to be Governor General. (Warren Hastings, the Governor, became the first Governor General).

(2) He was to be assisted by a Council of four members. Philip Francis, Clavering, Monson and Barwell named in the Act as members came from London. The whole administration of the Province of Bengal, Revenue, Civil, Military with power to make laws and regulations fell upon the Governor General in Council.

(3) Madras and Bombay came each under a Governor who was to be subordinate to Bengal in

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matters of declaration of war and peace. Their independent character was thus curtailed.

(4) A Supreme Court of Judicature was established in Calcutta. Its Chief Justice Sir Elija Impey and three other judges were nominated by the Crown.

(5) The Court of Directors was required to send Despatches relating to revenue and public affairs of India to the Crown.

However well-intentioned the Regulating Act was, it had certain loop-holes. In the Council the Governor General was bound by the majority of votes. Secondly as there was no clarification of the relation between the Governor General and his Council on the one hand and the Government and the Supreme Court on the other, the Executive was often-times powerless before the Supreme Court.

To remedy the defects, Prime Minister Fox introduced a Bill in 1783 which though passed through the House of Commons was rejected by the Lords through the intervention of King George III. Next year Prime Minister Pitt's India Act, of 1784 laid down the following provisions :—

(8) The number of members in the Council was reduced from four to three, one of whom would be the Commander-in-Chief. Councils of Madras and Bombay were also remodelled on the lines of Bengal.

(2) Governor General's powers were further enlarged. He got supremacy over Bombay and

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Madras in matters of Finance, Foreign affairs and Defence.

(3) "A Board of Control" was formed at Home with power to control the policy of the Court of Directors. It consisted of six members with Henry Dundas, Pitt's friend, as the first President.

This dual system of Government by a parliamentary Committee on the one hand and the Company's directors on the other lasted till 1858.

Then the Charter allowing the Company to trade expired in 1793 and was thence renewed in 1793, 1813, 1833 and 1853. Of these the last two Charters were very important. The Charter Act. of 1833 declared the Company holding the territories of India only as trustee of the Crown and enacted :—

(1) Governor General of Bengal becomes the Governor General of India. (Lord William Bentinck was the first Governor General of India.)

(2) A Law Member was added to the Council as the fourth member. He could sit and vote only when law was to be made. (Thomas Babington Macaulay was the First Law Member).

(3) Governor General in Council was empowered to make Laws and Regulations for the whole of India. (This took away power from Provincial Governors to make laws and Bombay and Madras became subordinate Provinces.

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(4) For services under the Company, caste, colour religion would not be any bar (vide page 92).

(5) North-Western Provinces were put under a Lieutenant Governor.

The Charter Act of 1853 introduced further changes :—

(1) Legislation was left to Governor General and his 4 council members, the Law member becoming hence forward an ordinary member for all purposes. Besides, the Chief Justice and a puisne judge of the Supreme Court, as also four Government officials were nominated by the Provincial Governments of Bengal, Bombay Madras and N.W.P.

The Legislative Council was thus formed with the above members and the Governor General as President :—

A Lieutenant Governor was hence put in charge of the administration of Bengal and Indians were hence permitted to appear at the competitive examination for Civil Service.

The Charter Act of 1853 curtailed some powers of the Court of Directors, six out of 18 members of which were to be nominated by the Crown.

Next happened the terrible Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. After the turmoil was quelled, Parliament took upon

Sir Frederick Halliday was the first Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

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itself the responsibility of the whole administration and administration passed hence from the Company to the Crown.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1858

An Act for the Better Government of India in 1858 was enacted on and Her Majesty the Queen Victoria herself proclaimed the transfer of administration from Company's hand to the Crown on 1st November, 1857. This proclamation of Her Majesty is known as Queen's Proclamation or Magna Carta of India which promised peace and prosperity to the people. The main subjects of the Proclamation are :—

1. All the treaties made with native sovereigns during the Company's regime will be taken for granted and the annexation policy* will be abolished.

2. The then officers of the Company will be regarded as Government servants and if considered suitable, there will be no bar to the Indians getting high Government employments without any restriction of caste, creed or colour, (See page 92).

(3) In the matter of administration there will be no difference between Indian Subjects and other subjects of Her Majesty.

* As was pursued by Lord Dalhousie.

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(4) All the mutineers except those, implicated in murder of British Subjects during Sepoy Mutiny, are hereby exempted from punishment.

After the Crown (Parliament) took over the charge of the administration and became supreme in India—both *de jure* as well as *de facto* the Governor General was appointed as Viceroy or Crown representative. Lord Canning was the first Viceroy of India. The President of the Board or Control was also replaced by the Secretary of State for India and the Board by the India Council, consisting of 15 members, 9 of whom were to be retired high Government officials.

The Queen's Proclamation or The Magna Carta, was the corner stone of the future prosperity of the Loyal India, but it was Lord Curzon who warned first in 1904 :

“Please do not lay so much stress on it, we shall *do so far as may be*”.

This twist by a Viceroy within half a century of declaration shook very much the faith of the Patriotic Indians towards British professions.

The structure of the Home Government was however, first made in 1858, and the Secretary of State for India in Council had full authority to control the Government of India in the name of the Parliament though in fact there was little interference with the acts of the Viceroy except in matters which affected the interests of England only.

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Though the mutiny was quelled, it took, however, sometime to restore contentment in the country as the oppression of the Indigo Planters convulsed Bengal from the hills to the shores. After the country settled down to peace, The Indian Councils Act was passed in 1861 for reforming the Legislative Council. It provided :—

(1) Besides the members of the Executive Council of the Governor General, there will be an addition of 6 to 12 nominated members (the two judges and 4 nominees of Local governments were not to be members).

(2) At least half of the nominated members to be non-official * and majority of them again will be Indians.

(3) Making of laws will be the function of the body thus formed, but the Governor General in Council could issue Ordinances† independently which would be in force for 6 months only.

(4) Provincial Government could make laws with the previous permission of the Governor-General but

*Of the non-official nominated members, the names of the following noted persons amongst others deserve mention :—Maharaja of Patiala, Dewan of Holkar, Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore, Babus Bhudeb Mukherjee, Romesh Ch. Dutt, Ananda Mohan Basu.

†The Ordinance of 1876 suppressed the staging of Gajadanda and the like farces from the National Theatre,

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not in matters relating to Post, Currency, Finance and Criminal Law.

The sum-total of the Reforms of 1861 did not prove of any use to India, as even the non-official members were nominated by the Government. It continued for long until the Indian National Congress started in 1885 stressed on this point of '*nomination*' and Charles Bradlaugh's Bill of 1890 wanted to substitute '*Election*' in its place. The Bombay Congress Session of 1889 was thus a momentous one owing to the presence of that 'Friend of India' who wanted to fight on the question of election on which depended the future position of India. The Calcutta Session of 1890, Nagpur Session 1891 and the Allahabad Session of 1892 did not take up any new resolution on Reforms but were waiting for the fate of the Indian Councils Bill.

II CALCUTTA SESSION (1890)

We now come to the seventh session of the Congress which was held at Calcutta in 1890. Sir Rames Chandra Mitra who had just retired from the Bench as Judge of the Calcutta High Court was proposed as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, but as he expressed inability on the ground of ill-health, Mr. Monomohan Ghose, the eminent Calcutta

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Barrister took up the place. Mr. Ghose was an invincible advocate in criminal cases and even the 'poor' were not deprived of his services. He hailed originally from Bairagadi (Vikrampore)

Sir Pheroz Shah Mehta was elected as the President of the Congress and he was one of the oldest and ablest leaders India ever produced. Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee was, however, ill and Surendranath too was unwell and came only once to move the resolution on 'Reforms'.

Delegates from outside Bengal were accommodated in Mr. T. Palit's house at 22, Circular Road, and 36, Old Ballygunge Road, Sir Rames Mitra's house at 17, Circular Road, 20, Loudon Street house of Raja Janakinath Roy and Mohon Bagan house of Mr. Kirti Mitter and other houses. Circular Road houses were reserved for Muslim delegates. Arrangements for food and lodging for 6000 persons including delegates and spectators were made and the Bengali delegates were requested to find accommodation at their respective relatives' houses.

Although 1000 delegates were elected according to a rule made in the last session, a little over 700 attended, but the number of spectators swelled high and great was the enthusiasm.

A few days before the Session of the Congress, a Government Communiqué was published in papers like Englishman, Pioneer etc. that no Government

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servants should be present even as a spectator in the Congress*. Even the cards for Lt. Governor, Sir Charles Elliot and his Councillors who were invited by the Congress were returned with the following reply :—

Belvedere, 26th Dec. 1890.

Dear Sir,

In returning herewith the seven cards of admission to the visitors, enclosure of the Congress pavilion which were kindly sent by you to my address yesterday afternoon, I am directed to say that the Lieutenant Governor and the members of his house-hold could not possibly avail themselves of these tickets, since the orders of the Government of India definitely prohibit the presence of Government officials at such meetings.

Yours truly

P. C. Lyou.

** : (The Bengal Government, having learnt that tickets of admission to the visitors, enclosures in the Congress Pavilion have been sent to various Government officers residing in Calcutta, have issued a circular to all secretaries and heads of departments subordinate to it pointing out, that under orders of the Government of India the presence of Government officials even as visitors of such meeting is not advisable and that their taking part in the proceedings of any such meetings is absolutely prohibited.)

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Mr. George Yule spoke very feelingly on the letter as "Some Dogberry clothed in little brief authority", "piece of gross insolence" and he repeated, 'Are we untouchable? Do we fall short in our loyalty?' and he spoke with force :

"Any instructions, therefore, which carry on their face as these instructions, do in my judgment an insinuation that we are unworthy to be visited by Government officers, I resent as an insult and I retort that in all the qualities of manhood we are as good as they."

A letter was also written to Lord Lansdowne, the Governor General, regarding this. He said in reply :

"Lt. Governor could not understand the import of the Circular exactly" He said :

"The Congress movement was perfectly legitimate in itself, that the Government of India recognise that the Congress movement is regarded as representing in India what in Europe would be called the more advanced Liberal Party as distinguished from the great body of Conservative opinion which exists side by side with it".

The Private Secretary also wrote in reply :—

"In reference to to specific question which you addressed to His Excellency I am to say that the orders apply only to those who are actually at the time being, Government servants but not apply to pensioners and others who have quitted the service of the Government for good".

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It is from this very Calcutta one day (November, 1887) Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, uttered "Microscopic Minority" about the Congress- The president now gave a reply to it :—

"We have survived the charge of being a microscopic minority, we have even managed to survive the grievous charge of being all Babus in disguise we have survived ridicule, abuse, misrepresentation, we have survived the charge of sedition and disloyalty. "

Indeed what contributed greatly to the success. of of the Congress amongst other things was the masterly speech delivered by Sir. P. Mehta the President who gave an idea of the work hitherto done towards the Reforms after the Bombay Session. He warmly expressed gratitude to Mr. Bradlaugh for the untiring energy, the indefatigable care, the remarkable ability with which he had worked for India in the house of Commons, how his Bill presented in the House of Commons, met a sad fate and how Lord Cross's India Councils Bill (an official Bill) was being considered, how he gave a good retort to Lord Salisbury's absurd suggestion that Government by representation did not fit eastern traditions or eastern minds, how after the first Bill was thrown out, Charles Bradlaugh introduced another Bill on similar lines to substitute election for nomination which (nomination) was advocated in Lord Cross's Bill".

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As desired by Mr. Bradlaugh Congress supported the India Councils Bill introduced by him which aimed at giving substantial instalment of Reforms in the administration in India and moved the following resolution :—

“That this Congress having considered the draft bill recently introduced into Parliament by Mr. Chalmers Bradlaugh, entitled “An Act to amend the India Councils Act of 1861”, approves the same calculated to secure a substantial instalment of that reform in the administration India for which it has been agitating and humbly prays the houses of Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to pass the same into law, and further that its President Mr. Pherozshah Mehta is hereby empowered to draw up and sign on behalf of this assembly, a petition to the House of Commons to the foregoing effect and to transmit the same to Mr. Charles Bradlaugh for presentation thereto in due course.”

Mr. Lalmohan Ghosh was the proposer and the Seconder was Mr. Ananda Charlu and supporter was Pt. Modan Mohan Malavya. Mr. Sarfuddin of Patna and others strongly protested against the arguments brought forward by Lord Cross and Lord Salisbury in the Parliament.

Syed Sarfuddin in a nice speech said :—

Arguments that Muslims are minority, their interest will be jeopardised due to the reforms have no value. Look at the very Patna City. There are 20

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seats in Municipality but in spite of the Hindus being in majority, they elect more Muslims. Out of 20, 13 are Muslim Commissioners. In Bombay, Hindus are in overwhelming majority, still 5 Parsis, 3 Europeans, 2 Hindus and 2 Muslims are members. In our country no inconvenience has arisen so far regarding the question of majority, and as such no majority question should arise ”.

The Hon'ble Pandit Ayodhyanath also thanked Mr. Bradlaugh, and, referred to Mr. Gladstone's promise to support his motion, as also to Lord Salisbury's rude reference to Dadabhai as “Black Man”.

Rev. Kalicharan Banerjee, Mr. Khaparde and others put up some other resolutions. In one of the resolutions it was decided that the 1892 Congress Session would be held in England. Mr. Caine M. P. invited the Congress to hold its next session in England. He spoke in inspiring language :

“It will be a great object lesson to the English people if we can gather together in the Exeter Hall or the Crystal Palace the Indian National Congress that men may bear for themselves and have reported verbatim in every newspaper in the land the reasonable, sensible, statesmanlike and truly patriotic speeches which are delivered here.

“In the name of all your friends in England and I will go further and say in the name of the great English people I promise you that when you come

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you will receive such a wel-come as will make your hearts rejoice ”.

Dr. (Mrs.) Kadambini Ganguly B. A. proposed a vote of thanks to the chair. This was the first time that a woman delegate addressed the Congress which bespoke how in the uplift of the Nation and attainment of India's freedom, a woman should also occupy a prominent place in the field of work.

This is the second time the Congress was held at Calcutta, but the general public could not still appreciate the objects of the Congress. The Bengalee Journal “Bangabashi” nick-named it as “Kanga-rash” and people did not regard it with the seriousness it deserved. Amongst other reasons, there was no contact between leaders and the mass.

There was no song worth-mentioning this year, but the National Stage supplied one. Girish Chandra's ‘Mahapuja’* was staged in Xmas and the following one was echoed from mouth to mouth :

“Punjab, Prayag, Oudh, Canoj,
Maharastra, Marwar,
Madras, Bombay, Assam, Nagpur,
Utkal, Bengal Bihar,

*The Star Theatre is nightly drawing patriotic throngs to witness its grand national work entitled ‘Mahapuja’ brought out specially in honour of the Congress, many delegates of which paid it a visit with ample satisfaction for their reward (Hindu Patriot Jan. ; 12, 1891).

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Hindu or Christian, Parsi, Muslims
being of one mind.

No Indian without unity
Any more you will find."

One of the characters in the play says :—

"Celebration of the Congress is necessary. The primary object is to spread fraternity in India, people of different places, different colours, different races residing in various Provinces of this vast country should embrace each other · we are different in race, religion, activity and language but we belong to one country and are subjects of one Queen Empress. In political matters we are one nation, our interest is the interest of India and in the prosperity of India lies our prosperity, with the prestige of India lies our prestige, in the improvement of India lies our improvement ; in the political movement working together we will win our objective".

Again Girish Chandra said through another character : "The object of this meeting is not gaining self-interest, but self-renunciation". Another Indian, while offering his small mite says :—

"We have to renounce some self-interest for the cause of Mother India ; we heard that great men have donated their blood as water for the sake of their motherland. Will not my motherland take this small offer" ?

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Taken altogether, the Calcutta Session was a great success.

III SEVENTH SESSION, NAGPUR (1891)

Mr. Hume went to England after the last Calcutta Session. He tried especially to hold the next Congress Session in England. But for various reasons the Session could not be held in London. The main reason was that there were too much of election activities in the month of December in London. In spite of that, Mr. Hume specially requested his Indian friends to come to England, but they did not agree. Mr. Hume next sent in his resignation and wrote :

“If the Session be not held in London, my resignation may be accepted. Now it is desirable that the Session should not be held in India for some time to come”.

But when nothing came out, it was decided to hold the Session in India. But who would invite ? At last it was Nagpur which got the honour.

No one was much willing to hold the Session at Nagpur, but a young Barrister Mr. C. V. Naidu was especially interested in this matter. His father Mr. Narayanswami was a famous pleader of Nagpur. Finding his son's earnestness, he agreed to accept the responsibility of the Chairman of the Reception Committee.

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A gentleman named Mr. Bhagirathi became its Secretary. Due to combined efforts of all, Nagpur Session too was very successful. Mr. Hume also reached Nagpur on 20th November, 1891. Through his personal and indefatigable labour coupled with the enthusiasm of Mr. Naidu and other local persons, the Congress Session was successfully finished with grandeur. That Mr. Hume did not fall behind to make the Congress Session a success with his presence clearly shows how much he loved Congress and that the significance of the title as "Father of the Congress" could not be better justified.

The Session was held at Lalbagh just near the Railway station. The Post Office and Telegraph Office were also nearer. The delegates were given lodging but all had to pay separately for their boarding.

No new resolution * was brought forward at all at Nagpur, only the old resolutions were discussed with great eagerness.

But unfathomable grief overpowered everyone at the death of Mr. Bradlaugh, Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra and Sir T. Madhava Rao ; and the President

* Mr. Hume on arrival sent a circular letter :—"the present Seventh Session of the Congress is needed not to discuss new subjects but to put the seal on all that its predecessors have demonstrated and to complete the cycle."

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Mr. Ananda Charlu specially referred to the revered Mr. Bradlaugh very feelingly :

“Embodiment of universal benevolence and the loss it meant to India as so soon he died, Lord Cross dropped even his feeble measure of Reform.”

In spite of all inconveniences the Congress session passed off well and those who thought that “Mr. Hume had journeyed from England to India to perform its burial obsequies” were much disappointed.

IV INDIA AND ELECTION—FIGHT IN ENGLAND

We shall now take our readers to some contemporary events in England which had a close connection with the affairs of India.

The India Councils Bill caused some sensation especially as the Parliamentary Election was conducted partly on “the Indian question.” As was said before, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh’s Bill was thrown out and Lord Cross’s official Bill was presented. The nature of the Bill will be evident from the observations during debate, made by Lord Northbrooke—

“I regret very much that Government has not been enabled to introduce into this bill any system whatever by which a portion of the non-official members of Legislatures could be chosen by some system of election or selection and not left entirely to a system of pure nomination.”

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Lord Ripon too said, "there should not only be introduced the system of election or selection in local legislatures but in Viceroy's Council also".

Lord Ripon, Earl of Kimberlay and Lord Stanley and Mr. Schwann and Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons debated the Bill specially on the point that this Bill should be established on election policy. Lord Salisbury was on the other hand pressing, "You must not drift to an elective Government of India." In the House of Commons, Mr. Curzon (afterwards Lord Curzon and Governor General of India) and Mr. Maclean opposed the Bill. But during the discussion Mr. Bradlaugh was not present. Due to excessive hard work, his health broke down and he had already left the world before this. Although his efforts were not crowned with success, Reforms and the Indian Councils Act of 1892, whatever form they took, were surely the result of his tremendous labours.

During this time much commotion was afoot in England with regard to Mr. Naoroji's election. It has already been said that in 1886 Mr. Naoroji stood as a candidate for election from Holborn Division of Finsbury Province but was unfortunately unsuccessful. Now from the beginning of 1887 he resolved to stand as a candidate from Central Finsbury in the coming (1892) election and at this Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister slighted him as 'Black Man'. This phrase from the Prime Minister brought an advantage

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to the Gladstonians. Mr. Gladstone too took serious objection to this.

Another advantage accrued due to the uncharitable remarks of Mr. J. Maclean who contested as a candidate from Oldham and as the Indian Councils Bill was placed then in the Parliament for discussion a great tussle was going on, concerning the Indian question, between Mr. Gladstone's and Mr. Salisbury's followers in the election struggle. Maclean in one of his speeches delivered in Oldham had said with regard to the rights of Indians and for Indian Reforms as follows :

"Hindus are slaves and Mohammedans are none but indentured slaves ; we have conquered India by the sword and we shall keep it so by the sword".

Loud protests were made from all quarters against Mr. Maclean's speech, who afterwards while in the club, said that during his address he only imitated Lord Macaulay. The question was that the Council Bill was presented with regard to the Legislative Assembly of the whole of India, while Macaulay had said in reference to Bengal. Moreover Macaulay also with equal severity criticised the Englishmen for their actions. Dadabhai Naoroji in reply to Mr. Maclean's utterances wrote in protest from 'National Liberal Club' on 16th May, 1892 as follows :

"Persons like Mr. Maclean misrepresent prayer of the Indians to have a fair proportion of elected

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members in the different councils. I am sorry I must repeat that persons like Mr. Maclean by inciting race-antipathies, hatred and recriminations will be the most instrumental in weakening or destroying British power in India”.

Mr. Naoroji, due to want of time could not reply more than this. But the students of India did not tolerate this national insult. They immediately summoned a meeting at Oldham and protested strongly against this uncivil behaviour of Maclean. At this time Chittaranjan Das of Bengal was preparing himself for the Civil Service Examination. The examination would be held within a few months. But he did not care that, and as their representative began to lecture as a protest against this insult on the national honour of India.

At first he got the Indians in England and the British who were friends of India together at Exeter and began to protest in a forcible language as :

“Gentlemen, I am sorry to find it given expression to in Parliamentary speeches on more than one occasion that England conquered India by the sword, and by the sword must she keep it ! (shame) ! England, gentlemen, did no such thing, it was not her sword and bayonet that won for her this vast and glorious empire, it was not her military valour that achieved this triumph, it was in the main a moral victory or a moral triumph (Cheers), England might

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well be proud of. But to attribute all this to the sword and then to argue that the policy of the sword is the only policy that ought to be pursued in India, is to my mind absolutely base and quite unworthy of an Englishman, (Cheers)".

Afterwards Chittaranjan was called from many places to speak regarding Indian Councils Bill and on the then election. At the Oldham meeting Chittaranjan made a very pithy address regarding Reforms. In the same address he severely criticised Mr. Maclean as an "An insect like him is not worth powder and shot" and "A Darwin might easily take him for the missing link" etc. The liberals were so much pleased at this protest against Mr. Maclean's unparliamentary remarks that cheers constantly poured on as "Horse-whip Maclean", "make mincemeat of him".

Chittaranjan also remarked in that meeting that our Legislative Council was only a farce. So he said :

" Our Legislative Councils are only gilded shams, splendored lies, magnificent do-nothings (cheers). We have men in those Councils who have no business to be there and others are studiously excluded without whom no legislature in any country can be perfect. We want Indians of the right sort, but His Excellency the Viceroy takes precious good care to nominate only men of a certain stamp, men either weak in intellect or persons in inclination—men entirely

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out of touch with the teeming millions of my countrymen and men whom you gentlemen in this country call aristocratic models”.

When he said “ what we want is real voice of the people to be heard in the Legislature”, there was a great commotion in the meeting. From the mental attitude during his youth so eager to preserve National Honour, the Student’s leader Chittaranjan promised to be the future Political Leader of India.

Now due to agitation and speeches during this time, many of Lord Salisbury’s party were defeated. Maclean was defeated in Oldham and Dadabhai Naoroji defeated his rival by 3 votes only (2959 : 2956) from Central Finsbury in the election battle. Advantage accrued to Dadabhai, as another Liberal candidate from the Ford Centre withdrew from the election. He was a Gladstonian. Only one rival was now left whose name was Capt. Pinton. He belonged to Salisbury’s party.

Mr. Naoroji now became the first Indian member of the Parliament. Before this, Mr. Lalmohan Ghosh had once tried, but in vain. The English people felt tremor in thinking that an Indian sitting in the Parliament would join in all matters regarding administration and legislation of the Empire. On the other hand, Lord Reay (previously Governor of Bombay in 1885) and men like Lord Ripon including even the great leader Mr. Gladstone were so much

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glad that they were very enthusiastic to congratulate Mr. Naoroji on his success.

V EIGHTH SESSION (Allahabad)

In 1892 the Congress Session was held at Allahabad. Special efforts were made to make Mr. Naoroji as the President but it became absolutely difficult for him to leave England as Capt. Pinton applied for re-examination of ballot papers. Mr. Naoroji had therefore to remain upto December, 1892, to await the result of this examination. Later in 1893 Session at Lahore he came and adorned the chair of the President.

Before the Congress Session was held at Allahabad, in 1892, The Indian Councils Act of 1892 was passed and its provisions are—

(1) The number of members of the Indian Legislative Council was increased from 12 to 16. Some non-official members were no doubt nominated but the opinion of Municipalities and District Boards had to be taken.

This paved the way for the introduction of Election-System.

(2) One nominated non-official Indian was taken to Indian Council from each Province.

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(3) Provincial members were also increased (8 to 20 in Bombay and Madras, 15 in N. W. P. and 9 in the Punjab). Municipalities, District Boards, Chambers of Commerce and Universities of big cities had right of election, but it was subject to approval of the Government.

The powers of the Legislative Council were no doubt enlarged and members were allowed to ask questions and to take part in the discussion of the annual statement, but the official majority was maintained and no real power was gained from popular point of view. Besides, the Government was not bound to reply to the questions nor could budget be affected any way by the discussion.

That these provisions did not meet with the aspirations of the leaders of the country will be evident from the first resolution of the Congress session of Allahabad in 1892 which runs as follows :

“Resolved that this Congress while accepting in a loyal spirit the India Councils Act recently enacted by the Parliament of Great Britain as explained by the present Prime Minister with the assent of the then Under Secretary of State for India that it is intended by it to give the people of India a real living representation in the Legislative Councils, regrets that the Act itself does not, in terms, concede to the people the rights of electing their own representatives to the Council, and hopes and expects that

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the rules now being prepared under the Act, will be framed on the lines of *Mr. Gladstone's declaration* in the House of Commons and will do adequate justice to the people of this country ; further that it prays that these rules may be published in the official Gazette like other proposed legislative measures before being finally adopted".

A like resolution on 'Representation' was moved by Mr. R.N. Mudholkar in the next Congress also (1893) in which he said fearlessly about the unsatisfactory results of the Councils Act 1892. He said that the Act was passed in 1892 as the Conservative Government feared that its successor would bring in a more liberal measure, that the Act did not give the right of election but allowed the Viceroy to make rules, to be approved by the Secretary and that in these there was "a sort of a right of election" and also the right of interpellation was granted, but no discussion of the answers, and the submission of the Budget to the Council, without right to vote there on.

The 8th Session was held at Allahabad. (1892)

The sterling Patriot Ajodhayanath convened the Congress with great hope but before the session he departed from the world. Pandit Bishambhar Nath was the Chariman of the Reception Committee and Mr. W. C. Bonnerjea of Bengal became again the President of the Congress.

No inconvenience was felt this time regarding

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securing accommodation. Long before, the Maharaja of Darbhanga, Sir Lakshmiswar Singh Bahadur had purchased the 'Lowther Castle'. He lent it to the Congress for use and not leased. This magnificent act of the Maharaja Bahadur was highly commendable.

About this time, Sir Charles Elliot, Lt. Governor of Bengal brought forward 2 bills :

1. Age of Consent Bill of 1891.
2. Jury Administration of 1892.

A terrible agitation spread from one end of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the other regarding these Bills. The country men were determined to protest against the proposed abolition of the jury system after 30 years without any valid reason. They also tried very much that the trial by Jury should also be extended to the Courts of Magistrates.

The Hon'ble Mr. Guruprosad Sen, friend of the poor, of Patna, tried heart and soul regarding this Bill. He addressed to the delegates by showing special reasons at Allahabad that the Jury system was part and parcel of our modern civilisation and should not be abolished after it had existed for thirty years. Babu Baikhunthanath Sen of Berhampore also supported him.

A Commission was eventually formed.

No special activities of the Congress after its Calcutta Session of 1890 deserved notice except that a

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resolution on Representation was passed, and as to the Consent Bill, though it convulsed the Province of Bengal and twisted the law of Sedition, as we shall see, the president Mr. Bonnerjea rightly urged the delegates with reasons as to why they should not interfere with social questions.

VI NINTH SESSION (Lahore)

The 1893 Session was held at Lahore. Sardar Dayal Singh was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. He was the founder of many public institutions like Library, College, 'Tribune' etc., at Lahore, and his enthusiasm about the Congress was praiseworthy. In 1892 Dadabhai Naoroji could not come from London. But in 1893 he adorned the chair. Students also specially honoured him. They loosened the horses and themselves pulled the carriage in which the President sat. This is the first instance in the history of the Indian National Congress when the President was so much honoured by the youngmen of the country.

Before he left for India to preside at the Congress, Dadabhai after being elected to be a member of the House of Commons had organised in England a Parliamentary Committee of about 150 members and when he presided at the ninth session of the Congress,

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he brought messages of good will from his constituents and from the Irish Party both of whom were sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. About this time, the famous journal "India" was also started for better propaganda in England and a British Committee of the Congress was also formed there.

Resolutions expressing thanks to Dadabhai's elections of Central Finsbury and to Lord Northbrook for his powerful advocacy of India's claim to bear her burden of home charges reduced, and assigning Rs. 60000/- for the British Committee as also for the journal "India" were passed.

VII TENTH SESSION (Madras)

The tenth session was held at Madras in 1894 under the presidency of Mr. Alfred Webb an Irish member of the Parliament. Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee was no longer in favour of a non-Indian being elected to be president except under special circumstances. Nevertheless Mr. Webb's address was good. Mr. P. Rangiah Naidu was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. There is nothing to discuss about the resolutions except that rules now in force under the Indian Councils Act of 1892 are defective and about prayer for fresh rules and the like. Like the last session, a sum of Rs. 60000/- was assigned for 'India' and expenses of the British Committee.

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VIII ELEVENTH SESSION (Poona)

In 1895, Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee was elected to be the president of the eleventh session of the Congress held at Poona. Poona may rightly be called the birth place of the Congress and but for the outbreak of Cholera the first session would have been held here. The same enthusiasm was evinced ten years after when the delegates swelled to 1584 in place of 867 of 1890 and 1163 of 1894. Ray Bahadur V. M. Bhide was the Chairman of the Reception Committee and was assisted considerably by Mr. Tilak and Mr. Gokhale. Surendra Nath whose carriage was drawn by students made a powerful speech, a part of which is given below :—

“ It is the Congress of united India of Hindus and Mohammedans, of Christians, of Parsis and Sikhs, of those who would reform their social customs and others who would not. Here we stand upon a common platform. Here we have all agreed to bury our social and religious differences and recognise the one common fact that being subjects of the same sovereign and living under the same government and the same political institutions we have common grievances ”.

Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, Pandit Madan Mohon Malaviya, Mr. Ambica Charan Mazumdar, Professor G. K. Gokhale, Mr. Ali Muhammed Bhimji, P. Ananda Charlu delivered very effective speeches,

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The Poona Session was a great success and the young men were specially urged by the President in his closing speech to carry on the work that is entrusted to their care.

IX TWELVTH SESSION (Calcutta)

The Twelvth Session was held at Calcutta with only 784 delegates and a large number of spectators under the presidency of Mr. Rahimatulla Siani, a lawyer of Bombay with Sir Rames Chandra Mitter as Chairman of the Reception Committee.

As the chairman was ill, his speech was read by Dr. Rash Bihari Ghose. The president next delivered a well-balanced address which though long, was a lively and reasonable one. He dwelt on seventeen important reasons as to why the Muslims should take an active part in the Congress. He contradicted all objections with marvellous skill and sound arguments.

In this session held at Beadon Park "Bandematoram" was for the first time sung. Rabindranath dressed in white robes performed that sacred task. The song in the nectar-like voice of the poet and accompanied by an organ played on by his brother Jyotirindra Nath produced an electric sensation.

A great famine was devastating the country at the time and the condition of the people will be better judged from the following resolution moved by Mr. Surendranath Banerjee :

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"That this Congress deplores the out-break of famine in a more or less acute form throughout India and holds that this and other famines which have occurred in recent years are due to the great poverty of the people, brought on by the drain of the wealth of the country which has been growing on for years together and by the excessive taxation and over-assessment consequent on a policy of extravagance followed by the Government both in the Civil and Military Departments which has so far impoverished the people that at the first touch of scarcity they are rendered helpless and must perish unless helped by the State or helped by private charity. In the opinion of the Congress the true remedy against the recurrence of famine lies in the adoption of a policy which would enforce economy, husband the resources of the State, foster the development of indigenous and local arts and industries, which have practically been extinguished, and help forward the introduction of modern arts and industries."

Mr. D.E. Wachia, Joint-General Secretary of the Congress was deputed by the Bombay Presidency Association to give evidence before the Royal Commission presided over by Lord Welby. The session came to successful conclusion and the President was presented a gold watch and chain by his Mahommadan admirers to which he gave a suitable reply.

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TILAK & THE 13TH SESSION

The thirteenth Session of the Congress was held at Amaraoti (C. P. Maharastra) and if the place of the birth of the Congress was at Maharastra, the spark of light came also from Maharastra and from its Guru Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The great luminary was not present at the Session of the Congress, he was then suffering the rigours of jail-life, but his activities formed the beginning of Repression pursued by the Bureaucracy on self-less workers which continued even till yesterday.

Tilak's case in 1897 and the 'Bangabashi' case of 1891 formed the back ground of the Law of Sedition the terrible clutches of which spare scarcely its likely victim. They also formed the back ground of the upsurge of the popular upheaval, although the latter case related to a social matter which it is beyond our province to deal in detail. As however, the effect was political, the discussion as a matter of history is necessary.

"The Age of Consent Bill" was put on the legislative anvil early in 1891 and the Hindu agitation was so widespread that even Congress leaders like

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Mr. W. C. Bonnerjea, Raja Rajendra Lal Mitra, Maharaja Jatindra Mohon Tagore and Sir Rames Ch. Mitra could not sit idle in spite of the fact that they always wanted the Congress to steer clear of social questions.

A meeting at the Maidan of Calcutta attended by about two lacs of men whom Kumar Sri Krishna Prasanna Sen kept spell-bound with his reasonings and eloquence showed how the mass mind was infuriated against the Bureaucracy. At such a time the following comment in the Hindu organ 'Bangabashi,' formed the subject matter of prosecution of its proprietor Babu Jogendra Chandra Bose and others concerned, under the law of Sedition. The passage ran :—

“ Mlechcha King is bent on ruining us, our caste and our religion. No need of holding any meeting, we should now leave the country and go elsewhere ”.

While giving charge to the jury, Sir Comer Petheram the Chief Justice of Bengal explained law of sedition in a novel way. Disaffection to him meant 'contrary to affection' and feelings of dislike or hatred constituted 'sedition'.

Tilak's imprisonment was the consequence of this interpretation of Law of Sedition twisted further by the trying judge. Now let us come to our theme—the events of the year 1897.

The year 1897 marked alternate joy and sorrow for India—joy all over, because of the Diamond Ju-

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bilee of Queen Victoria marking the 60th year of the reign of Her Majesty, while darkness despair and danger in the shape of famine, pestilence and disease engulfed her all over. There was an over-hall rice shortage and the great famine was staring us in the face of all. Plague on the other hand, broke out virulently in Bombay and Poona, and to combat the spread of the fell disease, the authorities opened a Plague Camp and Segregation Camp and people were removed to these camps for relief on mere suspicion of their being infected with the disease. Mr. W. C. Rand was then the Commissioner of Plague at Poona and Mr. Lewis was his assistant. The Punitive Police also frightened the inhabitants considerably.

Mr. Tilak was then the foremost leader of Poona. Not only he was vastly learned, but he was the most forward in political and humanitarian works. Besides he used to edit two papers, one 'Marhatta' in English and the other 'Keshari' in Mahrastra language. Extraordinary was the influence of the 'Keshari' at that time amongst the Marhattis.

Mr. Tilak also co-operated with the Government by opening a Plague Hospital. But men and women of Poona were too much agitated at the stringent way the Plague measures were unnecessarily carried out. The discontent of the Public mind found expression in their national organ "Kasari".

The Times of India, Times of London, The

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Pioneer and Englishman run by the British began to hurl slanderous attacks against Tilak, who on the otherhand felt "Plague measures by the Government are really commendable but the stringency with which they were carried should always be avoided".* Even the Bombay Government was much frightened at the way "the plague measures at Poona were carried with cruelty." Now The Diamond Jubilee was celebrated all over India on 22nd June, 1897. But a dire catastrophe was perpetrated at Poona that night. At dead of night when the said Mr. Rand, Mr. Lewis and Lt. Eyerst with his wife were returning from the Government House, Mr. Rand was shot by some one from behind and Mr. Lewis and Eyrst were next also shot. Mr. Rand was at once dead and Mr. Eyrst died shortly after in the hospital. The whole of Poona was shocked at this gruesome murder. Mr. Lamb was then the Collector of Poona.

Arrests and prosecutions followed and, Tilak was arrested on 21st July. The Editor of "Protod" was also apprehended. Biswanath Kelkar the eidtor of "Baivab" was next arrested and 2 brothers

*Amritabazar Patrika remarked (on 6. 7. 1897) :

"unvecessary stringency of Plague measures, not the writing in the native papers are responsible for the spread of dissatisfaction.

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Balbant Rao Natu (Balasahib) and Haripantha Ramchandra Rao Natu (Tata Sahib) were also arrested. These two brothers used to be popularly known as 'Natu Brothers'.

They were very influential men of Poona and were deported upto 1899. They were in Belgaum at the last phase of their deportation.

On being arrested Tilak was transferred to Bombay. Justices Pearson and Ranaday disallowed his bail petition. Afterwards, Justice Badaruddin Tyabji enlarged him on bail on Rs. 30,000/-.

The reason of Tilak's arrest was given as follows : Every year at Poona, Sivaji and Ganapati festivals were celebrated. The function took place this year also on 15th June. In that meeting while rising to offer his respects to Sivaji, Tilak justified the murder of Afzal Khan by Sivaji on a reference to the Bhagabat Gita, in holding that murder of very bad men is sanctioned there.

The authorities thought that some bad men being instigated at the words of Tilak, murdered Messrs Rand and Ayerst and Tilak should therefore be prosecuted.

Tilak's trial was held in the Bombay Sessions Court. Amongst the jurors, 5 were Europeans, 3 natives and one Jew. Tilak was defended by the famous Barrister of Calcutta Mr. Pugh assisted by Mr. Davar (afterwards Judge of High Court).

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Mr. Pugh said in argument, "Sivaji celebration was also held in previous years. Such celebration was like Wallace movement in Scotland. The present law does not contemplate such a slight offence. No act is fostered by an expression like this. By 'foreigner' is meant Muslims in the time of Sivaji".

Mr. Justice Strachy was the presiding Judge. While explaining the Law, he went a step further than Sir Comar Pethram in 'Bangabasi' case. He said : "Dis-satisfaction means want of affection, the very want of affection is punishable as it brings in dislike or hatred which in turn brings in hostility or ill-will of any sort—small, intense or mild. Existence of such feeling is sufficient for the offence ; it needs no consummation in the commission of any act."*

The Bangabasi case is the first of its nature. And Justice Strachy's judgment is a corollary to that. Both these have narrowed the Law so much that as soon, there is an accusation, the advocate for the accused can rarely win the case. Tilak was found

*On the basis of the above two remarks, in the above mentioned two cases, previous section of 124-A Indian Penal Code was amended by the addition of the following words —

"Whoever brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt His Majesty or the Government is guilty.

Disaffection includes disloyalty and all feelings of Enmity. Vide Act IV of 1898

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guilty by these six foreign jurors, but 3 Indians found him not guilty. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one and half years and he was treated like an ordinary prisoner in the Jail.

No doubt Tilak was imprisoned in this case, but he won the hearts, not only of the Marhattis but also of all Indians. Tilak's case is a very memorable event in the National History, and it will be no travesty of truth if we call him as the First Sufferer in a *Political Case*.

Tilak's imprisonment sent a wave of resentment all over Bengal. The Bengalees took up his defence and raised a huge amount for the purpose. Sri Motilal Ghosh, editor Amrita Bazar Patrika, Hon'ble Bhupendra Nath Basu and Sj. Hirendra Nath Dutta briefed the eminent Calcutta Barrister senior Mr. Pugh for him. Rs. 1200/- was also collected for application for permission of appeal, and in the Committee, Mr. T. Palit, Surendranath Banerjee, Guruprosad Sen, Motilal Ghosh and Hirendra Nath Dutta etc. were members. Their object was not only to defend Mr. Tilak but also to get the new amendments to the section 124A, annulled.

A meeting was called at the Calcutta Town Hall and the case of Tilak was argued in London by Mr. Asquith and Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, before Lord Chancellor, Lord Hobhouse and Sir Richard Couch in the Privy Council. Mr. Brown appeared on the

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other side. The Lord Chancellor ordered that special leave could not be granted to prefer an appeal to the Privy Council. Therefore, Mr. Justice Strachy's judgment stood as it was (Dec. 1897).

The Government could not remain at peace at the remarks of Sir Comar Pethram and Justice Strachy. Although Privy Council did not grant special leave to prefer the appeal but in each case, the Law might have different interpretations. Thus in the beginning of year 1898, the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, with the help of his Council, got the section of the Indian Penal Code amended as stated above.

Another wave passed through the heart of Bengal at that time. Bengal was ransacked to a great degree due to the earthquake on Saturday, the 12th June, 1897. Many a man lost everything they possessed and hundreds were turned homeless. The Bengal Provincial Conference* was being held at Natore when the Quake commenced.

*This time the provincial Conference was held at Natore. Previously this used to be held at Calcutta but from the year 1895 this conference began to be held in Muffusil. The first was held at Berhampore and the president was Mr. Ananda Mohan Basu : the second was held at Krishnagar with the Presidentship of the late Mr. Guruprosad Sen in 1896 and the third was being held at Natore with the Presidentship of Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore, I. C. S.

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With such misfortunes and tears and in the midst of such heart-rending tragedies, The Indian National Congress met in the year 1897 at Amraoti. The delegates although numbering a little over 600/- were much agitated at the Poona incidents that they listened like dumb creatures to the marvellous address of the President Mr. C. Sankaran Nair who in clearest language gave a graphic description of the people of the miserable condition and of the terrible sufferings of the Poona.

The President said :—

“The measures the Government had to take for the suppression of Plague in Poona are said to have interfered with the domestic habits of Hindus and Mohammedans. Soldiers were employed to enforce those Government measures who were rightly or wrongly, generally believed to have insulted women and defiled places of worship. The result was prostration of the people.

A feeling of helplessness came over them. In Western countries the result would have been lawlessness. In Poona many contented themselves abandoning their homes. Some resigned themselves to sullen apathy and despair. There were a few who protested and one was Dr. Natu a leading Poona Sirdar.

The inspections of houses by soldiers seem to have been carried out without notice by forcing open, very often unnecessarily when there were other means of entrance, the locks of the shops and houses when the owners were absent and absolutely no attempt was made to protect the properties of the houses. No notice was taken on complaints concerning them. A Hindu lady

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was assaulted by a soldier and Mr. Natu reported the matter to the authorities, producing witnesses. No notice was vouchsafed, the soldiers were refractory and complaint against them was obstruction. When a man fell ill many neighbouring families were taken to Segregation camp and left there without covering to protect their body or any furniture property at home including horses, cows and sheep being left unprotected. A man was unnecessarily taken to hospital and sent back as not being affected by plague to find his furniture destroyed and his poor wife and relatives forcibly removed and detained in segregation camp. Temples were defiled by soldiers and his own temple was entered by them on account, Natu believes, of his impertinence in making a complaint.

Insult was the reward for the services of volunteers and their suggestions were treated with contumacy. You all know how sensitive our Mohammedan fellow subjects are about the privacy of their women. And when Mr. Natu suggested that the services of Mohammedan volunteers should be availed of to search the Mohammedan quarters he was told that the conduct was improper and his services voluntarily rendered were dispensed with.

Natu brought all these to the notice of the authorities. "The Marhatta" complained, "Plague is more merciful to us than its human prototypes now reigning in the City....The tyranny of the Plague Committee and its chosen instruments is yet too rude to allow respectable people to breathe at ease".

After his fearless speech full of facts, the President gave a warning :—

"Natu Brothers were detained without a trial and Tilak was of course convicted by 6 votes to three and

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was treated as an ordinary criminal. Government had not answered the question as to the foundation of the complaints made. But India was asking it and posterity would ask it. To try to stop progress "*may compel underground passages or its overflow*".

It is needless to burden readers with the resolutions passed at this Session of the Congress. It is quite sufficient to bring home to them that the "Birth of the New Movement" (which was called extremist in 1906-1907, but became National from 1918 and is the only Movement now with the Nationalists) dates from the plague outrages at Poona, Deportation without trial of Natu Brothers, unwise attack of the Vernacular Press by the Anglo Indian Press, the unwarranted Press Prosecutions and above all the heroic suffering of the great Martyr of Liberty and *High Priest of Swaraj*—Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Indeed if Bombay was the birth place of the Indian National Congress Movement, *Maharashtra* was also the birth place of the New Movement which made India to recognise its own existence.

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14TH to 16TH SESSION (1898-1900).

In 1894, Lord Lansdowne left India and Lord Elgin became the Viceroy and remained till December, 1898. He was not narrow-minded but was weak and became a puppet in the hands of the Secretaries. While famine and Plague were like demons devouring Indians in hundreds and thousands, British Policy also was becoming narrower day by day, estranging the feelings of Indians also day by day. As to how the British were losing confidence of the people of England, will be clear from the speech of late Mr. Ramesh Chandra Dutt, I. C. S. one of the foremost moderate leaders of India. Mr. Dutt uttered a warning in a London meeting held on July 20, 1898 :

“ It is with deep regret that I have to say that I can hardly remember any time—my memory goes back to the time of the Mutiny—when the confidence of the people of India in the justice and fair play of English rulers was so much shaken as it has been within the last two years”.

Prosecution of Tilak and the editors and Plague measures were not the solitary instances of British injustice. Gross and invidious distinction in the

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Education Department was also palpable. In spite of assurances given in the Queen's Proclamation about equality to be maintained in services, even in higher services of the Department, salaries of the Indians were one third less than what Europeans used to get. Next in the re-organisation of higher educational services as made in November, 1896, salary of the Indians was not only reduced to half, but there were handicaps in getting higher appointments too. Very few Indians could get into Indian Educational Service, although their education in foreign universities, capacity and attainments fitted them in no less degree for the posts reserved for the people with white skin. This racial inequality touched the self respect of Intelligentsia very much. Not only in higher services of education, in Railway services and clerical services of the Government, Europeans had greater facility to enter and their behaviour and arrogance exasperated the Indians further.

Further, the very year when the Jubilee Celebration of the Queen was celebrated and fair treatment and impartiality expected, natives of Pure Asiatic descent whose parents or guardians were domiciled in Bengal, Madras and Bombay were excluded from entering into the Roorke Engineering College, but which was not closed to the Anglo Indians or to students of mixed blood, a rule which Dr. Annie Besant very pithily put in her book :

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"It is quaisant to notice Asiatics of impurer descent were not excluded. To give privileges to illegitimacy is peculiar to the Government of India !"

The behaviour towards Indians in South Africa was also very much one-sided. Mr. Mohanchand Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi) then was a Barrister there, but he was pained at the hateful and ignoble behaviour meted out towards Indians worse than to a slave, protested vehemently against this and was determined to see that policy wiped out altogether. The reader will be able to understand from the following instances of inhuman behavior shown to them :—

1. The Indian residents of Natal were deprived of voting rights in 1894, the disability of Indians in their own country being carried over to Natal.

2. An Act was passed in 1897 that they should pay Poll Tax like Jijiya ; otherwise they shall have to remain dependent for ever.

3. The shackles of Law fall on them only and not on the Whites. Mr. Harry Escombe, Prime Minister of Napal clearly stated :—

"No Government dreamt of applying the law to Europeans. The object, however was to deal with Asiatics".

4. Worst places were selected for their residence at Transvaal. Outside the town where rubbish and

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nightsoil used to be deposited, they had to reside in those places amongst dung-heaps.

5. In some of the colonies Indians could not tread the footpaths ; they could not travel in 1st and 2nd class compartments or could not remain outside at night after 9 p.m. and they had no right to go anywhere without permit.

Viceroy Lord Elgin referred to the cruel Natal Law and the Secretary of State for India, George Hamilton had described Indians as a Nation of Savages and that they are not to be addressed in any other cultured fashion than as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the domineering white population in the Colonies.

Not only that but contingents of Punitive Police were also being drafted to all places and the poor Indians had to bear expenditure incurred thereby. Detailed accounts would be superfluous.

It is however absolutely necessary to discuss in detail the discontent that brewed in Calcutta. The cause of this discontent was the "Mackenzie Bill" regarding Municipal matters.

After the end of Plague and other matters at Bombay and Poona, Sir Alexander Mackenzie Lieutenant Governor of Bengal became very eager to officialise the Calcutta Corporation. He hurled invectives on it as "an armoury of talk and an arsenal of delays." and presented a Bill to take

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away commissioners' powers According to this Bill a General Committee was to be set up with 12 members to help the Chairman. No question would have arisen if the majority of 12 members were elected, but 8 of these members were practically to be officials, 4 to be nominated by the Government and 4 to come from Trade and Commerce. These eight could defeat in every step the four elected members who would be there. The Europeans of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Trades Association were more averse to the Indians than the Government officials. Thus practically all the powers were being taken away from the elected members. Secondly the the Europeans used to remain almost absent in Corporation meetings and were indifferent, but now arrangements were made to pay them Rs. 32/ as fees, for their attendance in the meeting. This Bill, known as *Mackenzie Bill* and a similar Bill at Bombay thus dealt a severe blow to the Local Self Government of India.

The discontent spread in the country and in the meetings held throughout, pleaders, barristers, zemindars, talukdars and business men opened their hearts and began to give expression to their feelings of discontent. But the Bill was passed into Law and the gulf between the Government and the people was being widened gradually and differences increased.

Government took however an opposite view and

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although the causes came from its officers, Lord George Hamilton the Secretary of State, for India, expressed the official view in the following words :

"The British in India were sitting on gun powder all the time".

II MADRAS SESSION 1898

But the spirit of the people was expressed through the mouth of the President of the Fourteenth Session of the Congress held at Madras in 1898 in the Grand Assembly of the people in the following forceful, though restrained, words :

"Give up Co-ercion and find the path of safety, of honour of mutual advantage and the truest and the most abiding glory in going forward in fearless confidence trusting the people extending the bonds of freedom, not forging new fetters but gradually removing those that exist, not taking away but adding to the rights of the people helping on the cause of India's regeneration with the passionate longing and the loving ardour that come from the consciousness of a duty and solemn responsibility from on high. The educated classes of India are the friends and not foes of England, her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies here for her"

This time too, the Bengali delegates went to Madras by a ship. S. S. Bancoora, started on the 23rd December and reached on the 29th at Madras. The

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President Mr. Anandamohan Basu, Babus Surendra Nath Banerjee, Kalicharan Banerjee, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Baikuntha Nath Sen, Guruprosad Sen and Ashutosh Choudhury and others went together. The Presidential address was masterly and spectators said that the peroration of the address showed the finest oratory. We also think that the following words would throb into the hearts of all men and in all ages :—

“Hear we, my friends, the trumpet call of duty resounding to us amidst the stirring scenes, the moving enthusiasm, the thrilling sights of this great gathering. Yes, the call sounds clear, but let our hearts gather the strength to respond to that call and to be true to her, our common mother, the land of our birth, to be true and faithful to the light that is within us and to every noble impulse that stirs within us”

The following were the resolutions passed:

- (1-3) Condolence resolution at the death of W. E. Gladstone, Maharaja of Darbhanga and Sirdar Dayal Singh.
- (4) Resentment at passing of the Sedition Law inspite of objections raised in the last session.
- (7) Establishment of Secret Press Committees in certain parts of India is highly objectionable and inconsistent with the spirit of British Administration.
- (9) Disapproval of the reactionary policy of Government with

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regard to Local Self-Government recently inaugurated by the introduction of the Calcutta Municipal Bill in the Bengal Legislative Council and the creation of Bombay City Improvment Trust without adequate popular representation

- (12) Congress deplores the invidious and humiliating distinctions made between Indian and European settlers in South Africa, a prominent instance of which is afforded by the recent decision of the Transval High Court restricting Indians to "locations" and appeals to Her Majesty's Government and the Government of India to guard the interests of Indian settlers and to relieve them of the disabilities imposed on them.

This resolution was moved by G. Parameshvaram who put very eloquently his case.

Mr. W. A. Chambers, representative the London News Organisation was present. On presenting the 8th resolution to protest against the establishment of Secret Press Committees, he said :

"I am so much astonished at the establishment of 'Secret Press Committee' that no Englishman could approve of this arrangement. It can not be dreamt even that such thing might happen in a country ruled by the British ! Still we blame Germany and Russia !"

Lord Curzon succeeded Lord Elgin and set his foot on the shores at Bombay on the 29th December when President Mr Bose was delivering his address. In very suitable words he welcomed him. On the next day Mr Surendra Nath Bauerjee moved a resolution

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wishing that Lord Curzon's name may ring in the same tune as those of Bentick, Canning, and Ripon. Before leaving Home, Lord Curzon had also delivered several speeches expressing deep sympathy with the Indians.

Lord Curzon replied to the 'welcome' from Bombay on the next day (31st December) :

"I am overwhelmed at your hearty and cordial message of welcome. I hope when I shall return to my own country after discharging my duties entrusted upon me that everybody may understand from my work that during my time I have done something, if it even be but little for this land which, next to my own country is nearest to my heart".

Alas ! who knew that within a few years after this in 1905 late Mr. Gokhale, President of the Benares Congress did not hesitate to speak the truth :

"Curzon's rule had been the worst India had suffered since that of Aurangzeb".

President's concluding speech was also very touching and eloquent and the Madras Session with 614 delegates and Mr. N. Subharau Pantulu as Chairman of the Reception Committee came to a successful close.

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III VIVEKANANDA AND YOUNG INDIA.

Next two years were gloomy for India's political history, but a great luminary appeared on the Indian horizon. When India was being repressed and famine and pestilence stared us in our face and carried off thousands, there appeared before us the renouncing Sannyashi Swami Vivekananda and the imagination of the youth was at once captured. He was Bengal's Narendranath Dutt before, and carried off the banner of the all-embracing religion of his Gurudev Ramkrishna in the Parliament of religions at Chicago. But he was not simply a Sannyashi. 'Freedom of India' he set as the goal to the youth of India before their eyes and set out ideals before them for its attainment.

When he came to Bengal and found its youngmen so unmindful of country's aspirations, thus he addressed :

"Young Bengal, believe that you are men, believe that you are capable of working indefatigably, believe that God is by your side, believe that India depends on you and believe each of you will be able to set India free".

He would ask that those who were willing to dedicate themselves for any good work, should note three essentials. Thus he said :

"If you wish to do good to your country, when-

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ever it be, three things are necessary. The first is to feel.....

“Do you feel in your hearts that your innumerable brothers and sisters wallowing deep in prejudice and ignorance. Do their appeals, wants and their poverty touch your hearts ? Do you feel that they are really very poor and helpless ? Have you love for them, Do you really feel that their wants make your hearts full of sympathy for them ? If you come to such a plight, I will say this as ‘Earnestness’ and that is the first step.”

“You must next ask yourself whether or not you have found out a remedy—a way out.

“Thirdly, what is your motive ? are you sure that you are not excluded by greed of gold, by thirst for money or love of power ?”

“Mind, look to the innermost region
Entering inside into the secretmost lair
See if any self-interest is lurking there.
High ambition and hopes to be great
Do they lie there in secret
Donning the attire of patriotism ?
Craving for authority, or the good of India
Engage your heart ? Mark, test.”

[*Girish's Chanda*]

The next and the most important is—

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“Are you really sure that you can stand by your ideals, and work on even when the whole world seeks to crush you ? Are you sure that you are not misled, that you know and desire and will perform your duty and that alone you can even if your life be at stake ? Can you sacrifice every thing for your ideals ? Then indeed you are a reformer, you are a teacher, a master and we ought to kneel at your feet. Short of this, we owe you no reverence.”

Again Vivekananda said—“India can not be killed. Beggars you may remain, low and poverty-stricken, but so long as you do not give up God, India cannot die.”

The youths of Bengal had always free access to Narendranath. A new light flashed before them and from the all-renouncing Sannyasi, the Bengali youth got the initiation of the *Mantra* of Karma and Service.

If thence were seen youths in numbers ready for service and sacrifice, it was due to that *Mantra*.

IV LUCKNOW SESSION, 1899

The 15th Congress Session was held in 1899 at Lucknow and Mr. Ramesh Chandra Dutta, a worthy son of Bengal, took the chair. Rameshchandra Dutta was not only a high Government official but was very learned and erudite. He was not only the

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translator of Vedas in Bengali but also wrote many treatises regarding history etc. He was not only an analysing antiquarian, but wrote many historical novels in Bengli language viz., 'Bangabijeta' 'Madhavikankan', 'Jibon Provat', 'Jibon Sandhaya' etc. and social novels like 'Sansar' and 'Samaj' and in the novels, 'Madhavikankan' and 'Jibon Probhat' etc there was not only hisiory but many words regarding nationalism as well,/are found. To be accurate, it was Bankim Chandra who encouraged him to write in Bengali language.

Banshilal Singha became the Chairman of 'Reception Committee'. During the very first year of Lord Curzon's reign, there was famine. That is why Mr. Ramesh Chandra Dutta said with regret that the intention of Lord Curzon might not be bad but he was unable to understand the Indian mentality.

Ramesh Chandra dealt with famine and its causes. He thought that increase in population was not the cause of poverty. He said "even inspite of too much increased population there is no famine in Germany and England; The cultivators in our country are frugal but they have nothing to eat and nothing to wear, that is why they are forced to incur debt at high rates of interest. And they are alwys in want of money as their products and their home crafts do not find place in the market—foreign products having flooded our the country with cheap

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rates. The agriculturist class is indeed the back-bone in our country and this class to-day is withering without money and strength. Expenses of maintaining huge army they have to bear, and have to pay so many taxes also. The rate of rents, and of taxes in India is very high. For the above reasons famines are now an everyday occurrence."

Although there was no flourish of oratoriness in his address, but it was full of substance. Everywhere in it there was a message of hope.

Upto this time the Musalamans did not show much regard for the Congress. Even before this Session, a meeting of the Muslims was held at Balandabagh (Lucknow) on the 4th December, under the presidency of Raja Amir Hossin Khan when they were dissuaded from attending this Session. But it was a matter of great joy that inspite of that, in the Congress Session at Lucknow, much enthusiasm was noticed amongst the Muslims brothers and, 300 Muslim delegates joined the Congress Session, besides a member of spectators.

Surendranath moved the resolution on Local Self Government and addressed thus on this point with feeling eloquence :

"We had very great hope that Lord Curzon would abolish the coercion-policy and would also shun the crooked way but it is a matter of great regret that our hope has not been fulfilled. His speech how noble !

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how generous ! how sympathetic ! but his policy how narrow how illiberal, how an-English !

“Really we could not think it before, that we would be driven to such despair by Lord Curzon’s activities.

“We can not bring ourselves to believe that a ruler so sympathetic in his utterances, so generous, so large-hearted in his views, so deeply appreciative of the situation will countenance a policy opposed to the best tradition of British rule, repugnant to all that is highest, noblest and truest in British statesmanship.

“Sir, who are the men who are bitterly disloyal ? the men who say ditto to every measure of government or who in season and out of season sing the praise of Government !”

The following resolution on the subject was carried out :

“VII. This Congress expresses its disapproval of the reactionary policy subversive of Local Self Government evidenced by the passing of the Calcutta Municipal Act and by the introduction into the Legislative Council of Bombay of similar measure which will have the effect of seriously jeopardising the principles of local self interest.”

Due to efforts of Mr. Bansilal, the Chairman and Mr. Gangaprosad, the Secretary of the Reception Committee, all the business of the Lucknow Session

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was crowned with success. The Provincial Governor, Sir Anthony Macdonel too showed much sympathy and no inconvenience was felt regarding accommodation etc.

The virulence of Plague was still prevalent in Bengal and Bihar in 1899. Thus the delegates from Calcutta and Patna were put up in a tent pitched up near Purania which is on the other side of the Gomati river and is far away from the city. As the cold was terrible and flies in number, delegates there felt much inconvenience.

The Congress Pandal was made in the Sahamiana ground. This Pandal was very big and was prepared in a magnificent way. The main gate was also very charming. The Engineer was a Bengali gentleman named Chandra Mohan Boy. About 740 delegates were present.

Amongst these 603 came from N.W.P. and Oudh and 57 from Bengal.

When the President finished his address news came that the Natu Brothers had since been released. As soon as he proclaimed this news there was a tremendous wave of enthusiasm which was echoed and re-echoed with shouts of joy. These spontaneous out-bursts and shouts of 'Bandemataram' were again repeated in the Congress Pandal at Amritsar in 1919 when Ali Brothers and Dr. Kitchlew were released.

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The constitution of the Congress was first framed and passed in this Lucknow Session. It ran as follows :

1. "To promote by constitutional means, the interest and well-being of the people of the Indian Empire".

2. Delegates are to be elected by political Associations or other bodies and by public meetings.

3. 45 members will form the All India Congress Committee. Amongst them 40 will be elected by other Provincial Congress Committees and if there was no Provincial Congress Committee in any Province, representatives will be elected by delegates of that Province.

Their tenure of office will be in force from one Session to the other.

4. At least three meetings of the Committee will be held in a year and the Committee will have power to frame Rules and Laws.

5. The Provincial Congress Committees will hold Provincial Sessions and Provincial Committee will be spreading its work by forming District Committees.

6. There will be a British Congress Committee in England with a paid Secretary. The expenses will be Rs. 5000/- a year, which, the last Reception Committee and coming Reception Committee will divide with one another.

Due to oppression and coercion the Congress gradually became very powerful. Every year the Congress President painted a living picture of all events throughout the year and helped the growth

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of national ideas in mass mind, This was the practice going so long. But in the 10th Session of the Congress held at Bradlaugh Hall at Lahore, President Sir Chandra Bharkar's speech took a moderate tone. He was a famous pleader of the Bombay High Court, but before the Session, had got the appointment for the post of a Judge in the Bombay High Court. That may be the reason why his call to the countrymen was not so forceful. After the inspiring addresses of Sir Sankaran Nair (Amrabeti, 1897), Anandamohan Basu's (Madras, 1898) and Ramesh Chandra Dutta's (Lucknow, 1899) no body was satisfied with Sir Chandra Bharkar's speech. But this void was filled up at the Seventeenth Session of the Congress held in Calcutta in the year 1901. The Bengali's mind was very much perturbed and embittered due to the various currents and cross-currents of events which fully expressed themselves in the Calcutta Session of the Congress, held under the presidency of Mr. Dinshah Wacha.

The Chairman of the Reception Committee in the Lahore Session was Rai Bahadoor Kaliprasanna Rai who warmly welcomed the delegates, Mr. Tilak also attended the session.

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The new century was ushered in with tremendous hopes and aspirations for the people, and Calcutta, the great Metropolis of India witnessed the first Session of the new century and the coming Era of the New wave that would flow throughout India era long. Before the session was held, some events happened which though extraneous by themselves added to the momentum of mass-consciousness.

On the 22nd January, 1901, our revered and beloved Queen Victoria died at the age of 83 to the universal grief of Her Majesty's subjects. India rose to the occasion and manifested her loyalty to the full. Processions and meetings pervaded by a genuine feeling of love and adoration manifested scenes unseen and unheard of and even Lord Curzon startled at the scenes looked askance, 'If it is real, what does it mean ?'

The second memorable event was in connection with the two epoch-making judgments of Mr. A. P. Pennel, a Sessions judge, the impartiality of which moved every Indian to extend to him the amount of reverence as had been shown seventeen years ago to Lord Ripon. Mr. Pennel's impartial orders, treatment meted out to him by the Government of Bengal and

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of India and the enthusiastic feeling awakened in mass-mind against the queer sense of justice of the British Imperialists, formed an eventful chapter of Indian Nationalism and our readers should not be denied those stories of romance. Indeed what the resolutions on the "Seperation of Judicial from the Executive Duties" passed in all the sessions of the National Congress from 1886 down to the present could not, the judgments of Mr. Pennel did ten-fold. The facts therefore require elucidation.

Mr. Pennel was an Irishman who stood first in order of merit in the I. C. S. Examination and worked as a District and Sessions Judge in some towns and of late was stationed at Chupra.

Mr. Twidell was the Offg. District Magistrate, Mr. Bradley Superintendent of Police, Mr. Corbett Asst. S. P., Captain Maddox Civil Surgeon, and Mr. Simkins as District Enginneer there. There was also a club at the town for these gentlemen and for one or two more Europeans who were living there.

Now a Bundh in the Saran District having given way, Mr. Twidell wanted the Zemindars to repair it which they refused to do. On the 19th August, 1899, Mr. Corbett and Mr. Simkins went to the village of Fulwari and asked a villager one Narsing Singh, who was a constable serving at Jalpaiguri, but now on leave at home for illness, to raise the earth. Narsing was a Chhatri by caste and he

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refused to do the menial work. On his refusal to do it, Mr. Corbett lost temper and asked—"Tom Kon Ho ? Who are you ?" "A constable of Jalpaiguri, Huzur." "Are you doing or not doing ?" Narsing said that he did not care for the Saheb's orders.

At this Corbett seized the man by shoulders, turned him round, kicked his bottom and told him to go. Narsing then retreated two or three yards and then ran at Mr. Corbett. Mr. Simkins hit him on the head with a rattan and Mr. Corbett struck him in the face with his fist causing him to fall against a house. Narsing then called out villagers to help him. Sita Chamar came up and raised his lathi to beat Mr. Corbett when Mr. Simkins snatched the lathi from him and hit him on the head with his rattan. The villagers apprehending further trouble came to work on the bundh and Narsing was some time after allowed to go, leaving a substitute as he was ill.

On the next day when Narsing was admitted to the hospital for his wounds which turned out to be serious, Capt. Maddox thinking that a complaint might be made by him in court hastened to the club when Mr. Corbett was there but Mr. Bradley was not.

Mr. Corbett came to the hospital and took Narsing to the house of Mr. Bradley, where the latter asked Narsing to give up service in which case nothing would be done against him.

Narsing did not agree and was taken to the house

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of Mr. Twidell (Magistrate). After consultation it was settled that Mr. Corbett would submit a report to the Magistrate on which action would be taken. Narsing was then put up for trial under section 323, (assault), 353 obstructing public servant in discharge of public duties and 504 (Intentional insult) of the Indian Penal Code.

The irony of justice was that although seriously assaulted, Narsing was rather convicted and sentenced to two months' rigorous imprisonment by Moulvi Zakir Hossain, Deputy Magistrate to whom the case had been transferred by the District Magistrate. But the case coming on appeal before Mr. Pennel, the Judge saw through the whole game and taking further evinence of Messers. Twidell, Simkins, Corbett, Maddox, Bradley and Zakir Hossain found that grave injustice had been done to the poor man. He thus allowed the appeal and ordered Narsing to be acquitted and set at liberty. It is clear from the findings that no pains were spared by the executive to thwart justice. In his judgment Mr. Pennel made the following observations :

“Assaults by Europeans upon natives are unfortunately not uncommon. They are not likely to cease until the disappearance of *real or supposed racial superiority*. It is proper no doubt, that they should be punished but excessive severity in punishing them so far from improving is more likely to exacerbate the

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relations between the two races, and to defeat itself. The better men among the native community are themselves disposed to make allowances for the irritability which this climate has a tendency to produce in the European character and the occasional acts of violence in which that irritability vents itself".

This judgment of Mr. Pennel, passed on Oct. 7, 1899 produced commotion in the executive throughout the province. Even the Lieutenant Governor Sir John Woodburn was startled and Lord Curzon considered Mr. Pennel's act as an abuse of "Liberty of Enquiry".

The matter did not rest simply in the opinion of high officials. In a week's time Mr. Pennel was telegraphically ordered to be transferred to Noakhali, a district rather of little importance and a bit unhealthy. It was also out of the way.

Not only did Sir John Woodburn come down to Noakhali within two months' time with Chief Secretary Mr. Bolton on the ground of improving jail conditions at Noakhali, (although Mr. Pennel said that there was no necessity whatsoever to call for his His Honour's presence on that account all on a sudden) but the Lieutenant Governor also called Mr. Pennel in his private room and thus addressed :

"Seeing your judgment I have grave doubts whether you are fit for judicial employment. The judicial officers are my officers just as much as the execu-

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tive and I want them to do well. Mind, I am speaking for your benefit and guidance. Reading your judgment leads me to doubt whether you were really so impartial as you should have been. The vindictive rancour with which you pursued the policemen and the District Officers makes me think you must have had some quarrel with them”.

Pennel—“You may think like that, but a judgment like that was *worth two National Congresses*”.

Lt. Governor—“As impartial man I pass my opinion”.

Mr. Pennel.—“I know your Government had done all they could to prevent truth coming out”.

Lt. Governor was a little agitated and said :

“My Government ! Be careful Pennel, you had better be careful what you are saying”.

Mr. Pennel—“You consulted Legal Remembrancer whether witnesses need appear before me and it was when Handley told “yes, of course they must”, you gave way”.

Sir John (more irritated)—“Yes, I had every right to consult the Legal Remembrancer. It was a trumperry case.

Mr. Pennel—“Trumpery case ! Should I have any reference about this matter to the High Court ?

Woodburn—“No, Pennel, I am not going to enter into any discussion with the High Court. I am speaking to you privately”.

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Then, about the judgment—the Lt. Governor said “Your judgment is too long. Any other judge could have disposed of it in two pages”.

Pennel—“My judgment was full of facts and there was very little comment on it.”

From this conversation we can gather whether British or European if any judge is willing to mete out justice in the real sense of the term in a case in which whites are implicated, humiliation is the consequence. Were it otherwise, Sir John Woodburn would not have come down to Noakhali himself and taken the judge Mr. Pennel severely to task.

That it was no less dangerous for the natives to give evidence in a case in which British officials are implicated, Mr. Pennel has referred clearly in another judgment of a similar nature in another case :

“In this country the only people who will come forward to give evidence against officers in the case of this kind are those who do not mind their houses being burnt, their shops looted, their relations turned out of Government employment, themselves and members of their families dragged up on false charges and sent to jail”.

In such circumstances the scrupulous adherence to justice as Mr. Pennel had shown by calling in the witnesses to elicit truth although Lord Curzon and Sir John Woodburn objected to it, leaves no room for doubt that the Indian mind will remain ever grateful

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to real British justice exhibited through the impartiality of judges like Mr. Pennel.

Other circumstances of law and fact are also elicited in Mr. Pennel's judgment.

On the day the judgment was given by the Magistrate, Mr. Bradley, Police Superintendent was present in Court, sat by the side of the Magistrate and discussed about the case with him. Trying Magistrate Zakir Hossain also admitted that before delivering judgment he had seen the District Magistrate and had discussions with him about the case to which Mr. Pennel remarked that "Zakir Hossain was a man without conscience with no fear of God before his eyes and that Mr. Twidell prostituted his high office of District Magistrate to screen his friends (Corbett & Simkins) from justice".

In Pennel the Indians appreciated what British justice meant and began to call him as an incarnation of justice.

In Noakhali too, Mr. Pennel had to meet similar miscarriage of justice. Mr. Cargill was the District Magistrate there, Mr. Raily Police Superintendent, Osman Ali was Sub-inspector and Kailash De was the Head Clerk in the office of the Police Superintendent. Mr. Pennel was astonished to see the organised unity amongst the executive of the District in a currency note theft case to screen the real offenders.

A few days passed and another case of a unique

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character came up at Noakhali. There was enmity going on between one Sadak Ali and Ismail Jaigirdar of a certain village. On a rainy night in 1900A.D. when Ismail was returning home after winning his case, some body murdered him on the way. The following morning, his son Idrish seeing the dead body of his father floating in a tank, complained against Sadak Ali etc. in the police station. The Sub-inspector Osman Ali enquiring into the case set the accused at liberty for want of evidence. There after the complainant Idrish made an application before Mr. Ezikel then Magistrate of Noakhali to the effect that the Sub-inspector Osman Ali was a relative of the accused and released the accused without taking evidence and making proper enquiries. The Magistrate ordered the Police Superintendent Mr. Raily to enquire and report. As Sub-inspector Osman Ali was a special favourite of Mr. Raily, he also supported Osman Ali's views. Mr. Ezikel again ordered the Inspector Mathura Babu to enquire into this case and report. Mathura Babu sent up 3 men Sadak Ali etc. for trial under charges of murder.

When the case came up for hearing in the Sessions Court in due course, Mr. Pennel ordered Sadak Ali to be hanged and the remaining accused to transportation for life.

Mr. Raily deposed for the accused persons.

This case roused such sensation amongst the

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public in Noakhali, that about 10000 men followed Mr. Pennel upto his Bungalow by calling him as a Daniel or a Dharmabatar. After the judgment was passed Mr. Pennel got Mr. Raily arrested by Munsif Nabin Babu without bail under sections 193 and 466 of the Indian Penal Code on the charges of giving false evidence and forgery.

The judgment was given on 15th February, (1901).

Mr. Pennel included in his judgment of this case all the relative correspondence and conversation that had passed between him and Lt. Governor, Mr. Bolton, the Chief Secretary, and Mr. Bourdillon Commissioner, Patna, regarding the previous Chupra case also, and pointed out all the defects of the administration. He himself came to Calcutta with the judgment and went to the bungalow of Sir Charles Maclean, the Chief Justice, who regretted in writing his inability to see him.

When the case came up before Justices Amir Ali and Brett, Mr. Pennel was suspended by the Government on the recommendation of the High Court for not having sent the records of the case to the Registrar Mr. Chapman in time. Mr. Raily was released telegraphically on bail by the Chief justice Sir Charles Maclean who also quashed all the proceedings against the Police Superentendent.

At the time of hearing the appeal, the afore-said

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judges ordered for retrial of Sadak Ali and ordered the other two to be set at liberty. This time the case came up for hearing before the Judge Mr. Geidt. He too found Sadak Ali guilty under section 302 (murder) and sentenced him to transportation for life. Mr. Geidt's judgment corroborated the anxiety and sense of justice of Mr. Pennel.

Now these two cases helped very much the cause of the Congress as Mr. Pennel vindicated what Congress was fighting for. Thus in the next Provincial Conference held at Midnapore the President (Mr. N.N. Ghose, Principal, Metropolitan College) a gentleman of great erudition and culture spoke highly of Mr. Pennel and his sense of justice, and Mr. J. Choudhury Bar-at-Law expressed high admiration how for the sake of justice Mr. Pennel sacrificed his future prospect, not forgetting to mention how the Chief Justice rather helped the Executive of the Province.

As to how popular feeling was roused in admiration of Mr. Pennel against the injustice and partiality of the Government was evident, when Mr. Pennel, after suspension, proceeded to Calcutta and a procession of about 15000 people of all classes silently accompanied him from his bungalow to the station. On both sides were the rows of men and in the midst moved Mr. Pennel's carriage. They were singing intermittently and shedding tears. At-last when Pennel took leave of them, they parted in silence with faces sad and

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tears trickling down cheeks. He was also given the same ovation station to station and when he went to Barisal, the same scenes under the guidance of Sj. Aswini Kumar Datta were repeated. The whole of Eastern Bengal Districts including Dacca and Chittagong reverberated in feeling against the British justice as meted out in similar cases in India.

Lord Curzon was then leaving India on leave for reasons of health. The news of popular enthusiasm reached him and astonished he uttered "If it is real, what does it mean?"

Such mass awakening in Hindus and Mussalmans, Officials and Zemindars, students and shopkeepers, illiterate peasants and labourers contributed to the unusual enthusiasm in the Calcutta Session of the Congress. When in the open session Sri Ambica Charan Mazumder moved the resolution on Separation of the Judicial and Executive Duties and referred to the treatment by Government to Mr. Pennel, audience cried 'Shame', 'Shame' and the speaker in retort said "You cry shame, but shame is ashamed to sit on such a case!" The whole audience staggered in indignation.

This awakening was the precursor of a much greater agitation that would be shaking India from the hills to the sea when Lord Curzon was next determined on the Partition of Bengal.

The Seventeenth Session of the Congress, how-

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ever, began to draw near and arrangements for its success were in the process of preparation. The Hon'ble Mr. Dinshaw Wacha of Bombay was the President and Sir Jagadindra Nath Ray, Maharaja of Natore, and a descendant of the memorable Rani Bhabani became the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Dr. Sarat Ch. Mallick came from London and joined the Congress.

Three or four months before the Session, Surendra Nath toured round through Bankipore, Bhagalpore and other districts of Behar and spread the path of education sometime in November 1901. This humble writer was present in the vast meeting at Patna when he dwelt impressively on Separation of the Judicial and Executive and Simultaneous Civil Service examinations etc. in the Anglo Sanskrit School. The Hon'ble Khodabux Khan Bahadur took the chair and Sir Ali Inam (then Mr.) Bar-at-law spoke against. He said that if Muslims joined this movement, it would do harm to their community.

Twenty-seven years after in his maturer experience we again saw Sir Ali Imam keen on maintaining the interests of Hindus and Muslims alike and fighting for 'Joint Electorate' in 1928.

Great enthusiasm prevailed in the Congress Session this year, particularly in the opening song.

Sja Sarala Debi, daughter of Mr. Janakinath Ghosal, who had some influence with the younger

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generation collected 50 singers from different provinces and charmed all the delegates and spectators with the following song composed by herself :—

“Nomo (Bow 'To) Hindusthan”

“Recount all your past glories.
Sing them to-day ‘Hindusthan’.
Charm the audience by my song.
Sing, Sing to-day, Hindusthan.
Sing the glories of power, wealth, fame
Sing that song.
Bengal, Bihar, Oudh, Orissa, Madras, Marhatta.
Gurjar, Nepal, Punjab, Rajputana.
Hindu, Parsi, Jain, Christian, Sikh, Musalman.
Sing all, in all languages.
Bow to the Hindusthan,.
‘Hara’ ‘Hara’ ‘Hara’ Victory to Hindusthan.
Dadar Haramjad Hindusthan.

*

Elahi Akbar Hindusthan,
Bow to thee Hindusthan,
Sing Sing that all encouraging message,.
Sing, sing to-day in a new tune,
Hoist the flag of activity and religion,
Rouse the pulsation of life
Bengal, Bihar (chorus)...
Hare Murare Hindusthan,
Glory to Lord, Hindusthan,

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Alakha Niranjana Hindusthan,
Bow to thee Hindusthan."

As the song was vibrating and resounding, an electric sensation passed through the whole house.

The President Mr. Dadasaheb Wadia also spoke with very forcible language :

"Insane imperialism, to use Mr. Morley's phrase, with its mischievous policy of retrogression and repression is in its ascendant for the moment. No doubt we have good government but it is not unmixed with many an evil".

On the second day, another beautiful song from *Bharat Sangit* was sung in chorus which also created similar enthusiasm. The song was composed by S. J. Jyotirindra Nath Tagore :—

"Oh, sons of India, proceed together

Motherland calls you,

With heroic might and with manly pride

Do good to your motherland.

Who removes the misery of mother except son ?"

Arise, Awake, say all of you, mother, we dedicate our lives for you."

Lokamanya Tilak (then Mr.) could not reach Calcutta on the first day of the Session, but he joined on the second day. The assembly was loud with cheers on seeing him.

Mahatma Gandhi (then Mr.) proposed a resolution from the Congress on behalf of Indians in

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South Africa. * An Englishman named Mr. Smedly said "My last word is "Go in for Home Rule for India and the blessings of God rest on your efforts".

Messers. W. C. Bonnerjee, Ashutosh Chowdhury, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Monoranjan Guha Thakurta, Dr. Sarat Chandra Mallick, Bipin Chandra Pal and Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta etc. also addressed the meeting and those addresses were very impressive and Surendranath's exhortation—"We are veterans of Waterloo and do not confess to a defeat"—thrilled all.

The proposal to set up an All India Industrial Exhibition had started from the Amoraoti Session and since 1897 had formed a limb of the Congress. The Seventeenth Session of the Calcutta Congress was also not an exception. The Exhibition was to foster sympathy amongst the mass for indigenous products. The late Mr. Ramesh Ch. Dutta explained clearly that famine was the only inevitable conclusion of the present exploitation policy.

* This Congress sympathises with the British Indian Settlers of South Africa in their struggle for existence and respectfully draws the attention of His Excellency the Viceroy to the Anti-Indian Legislation there, and trusts that while the question of the status of British Indian in the Transvaal and the Orange Free Colonies is still under the consideration of the Rt. Hon. Secretary of State for the Colonies His Excellency will be graciously pleased to secure for the settlers a just and equitable adjustment there-of."

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To eradicate exploitation and with a view to improve national industry, the Exhibition was opened. Maharaja Bahadur Sir Suryakanta Acharya Choudhury of Muktagacha, Mymensingh was to open this Exhibition, but as he was ill, Maharaja Munindra Chandra Nandi of Cossimbazar presided. The song composed by the patriotic poet Mr. Atul Prasad Sen "Rise Of Laksmi of Bharata" was very timely and opportune.

We now close this volume and take leave of our readers with the ray of hope that the fateful night of 1897 with its accompaniments is over, and the dawn of the 20th century is just peeping. Men have been poor and famished, and plague, pestilence and favouritism have been scourges to them. They however know to gather in masses and leaning to indigenous industries has grown. There remained only a great hurdle to break all slumber of the people and bring out the real genius of the Nation and the mighty hand of Lord Curzon supplied it. Young men also got Heaven's light now from Swami Vivekananda. Every thing was in favour. Lord Curzon's reactionary policy made even dead rivers to spout. The flood was in sight, it moved in currents and with the help of the breeze raised by the new Bureaucratic move flooded the whole of India.

The growth and flow of that New Current will be dealt with in the next volume.

BANDEMATARAM

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